University of Alberta

Implications of Mega-project Development for Adult Education in the Northwest Territories

by

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Abstract

This empirical research inquiry examines the influence that the current economic climate - driven by the extraction of non-renewable resources currently underway in the Northwest Territories - is having on adult education policy and program development. A qualitative methodology involving open-ended interviews was chosen for this study to better understand local realities of labour market influenced educational policy and its implications on policy process and practice from the voices of those given authority and responsibility for developing policy on behalf of northerners, and also those affected by such policies. Interviews were conducted during the summer of 2005 and included policy planners at Aurora College and other stakeholders involved in northern development, adult education and training. Findings suggest cooptation of adult education by market forces has occurred despite increased local autonomy through recent aboriginal self-governance initiatives. Implications for community sustainability and governance are examined within this context.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION AND IDENTIFICATION OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

Chapter Introduction

Standing in a government building in downtown Inuvik, my eyes are drawn to a series of glossy posters located in the foyer. There are four and each one represents a cornerstone of the new North[1], inviting residents to share in the region's bounty of riches. The first is entitled "Why Self Government?" with a caption reading: "Self-government will allow the residents of the Beaufort Delta to determine their own futures." The next deals with education: "The future of the Beaufort-Delta is in educating its people." A caption below it reads: "Education will have the benefit of incorporating Gwich'in and Inuvialuit cultures and languages." Oil and gas development are the focus of the remaining two. Several phases of the Mackenzie Gas Project are outlined, beginning with a feasibility study (2000-2001) and ending in operation eight years later. The final poster translates this progression into economic opportunities with the question: "How can I use my skills and interests in the oil and gas industry?" In response, various trades are listed, ranging from mechanic and rig worker to first aid technician and instructor.

Back in Edmonton I contemplate my visit North. Having completed a series of interviews with people involved with northern development and adult education, it became evident that large scale development, commonly referred to as mega-project development, is as much an *idea* as it is about the manifestation of tangible *outcomes* for a particular society. As the messages in the posters testify, the idea of development gets incorporated into the collective psyche through a language couched in rational terms, accompanied by linear projections.

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[1] For purposes of this discussion the North shall refer to the geopolitical boundary that demarcates Canadian territories north of the 60th parallel of latitude.

However, the lexicon of development with its putative aura of objectivity raises tensions when juxtaposed against the more fluid dynamic of society which education and mega-projects must inevitably operate within - an issue raised by Swiss post-developmental theorist Gilbert Rist (1999) who surmises, "Development appears to be a belief and a series of practices which form a single whole in spite of contradictions between them" (p. 24). Within this context, education becomes a catch-all phrase designed to "form a single whole" by bridging cultural values with those of modern development "in spite of contradictions between them." The relationship between adult education and recent mega-project development in the Northwest Territories (NWT) is the subject of this thesis.

As someone who has spent most of my life growing up in the North, I have experienced "boom and bust" cycles that accompany non-renewable resource development. During my teenage years I grew up in a mining town called Pine Point, located south of the Great Slave Lake between Hay River and Fort Resolution. The Canadian-based multinational mining company, Cominco, owned both the mine and nearby town site. In 1981, the town had a population of approximately 1800 - the vast majority being non-indigenous southern mining families that had followed the work north. At the time, Pine Point was touted as one of the world's largest open-pit mines. In 1988 Pine Point ended its 25-year operation when lead and zinc prices plummeted.

Between interviews in the summer of 2005, I flew from Yellowknife to Fort Smith, where my family relocated. Peering down, one can still see the scars of the old mine site, where endless cut lines are punctuated by large canyon-sized craters left over from the open pit mining operation. As for the town, the only vestige that remains of this once vibrant place are its roads - now a grid of crumbled asphalt etched into the boreal landscape.

In the fall of 1992, I moved to Yellowknife. I was about to witness one of the most spectacular boom and bust cycles to shake the North. In the summer of that year, employees at Yellowknife's Giant Mine were locked in a bitter labour dispute with their employer, Royal Oak Mines. The strike tragically resulted in the deaths of nine replacement workers who were blown up at the hands of a disgruntled, striking miner. These events represented the worst labour dispute in Canadian mining history.

The strike was not the only legacy the now defunct mine has left northerners. Like Pine Point, the owners of Giant Mine abandoned environmental reclamation when it went into receivership in 1999. During its 50 years of operation, the mine produced 237,000 tons of highly toxic arsenic trioxide dust, which is currently festering in underground caverns and potentially impacting the local watershed. Estimates for clean-up ranges from 50 - 400 million dollars (Indian Northern Affairs Canada, n.d.).

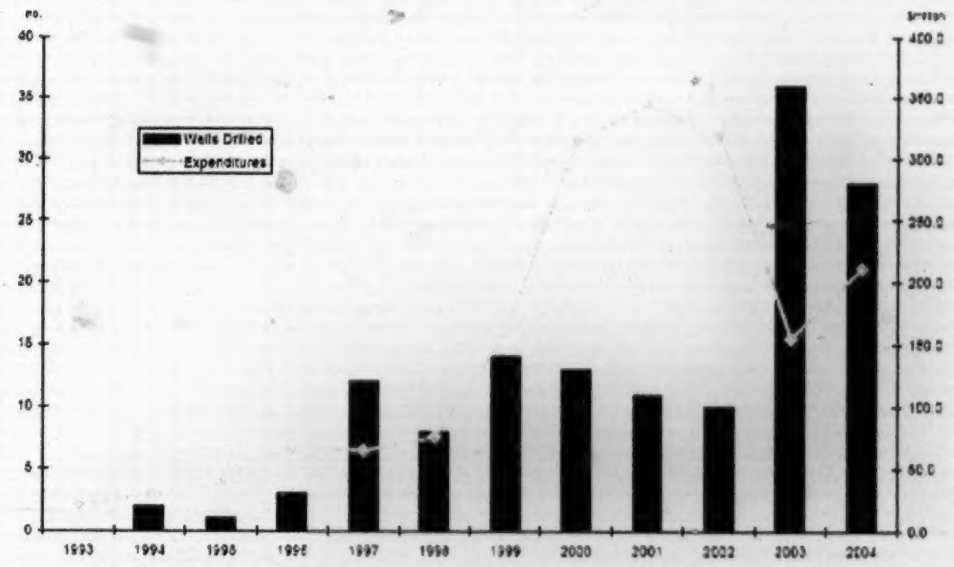
At the time of the strike, Yellowknife was primarily a government and gold mining town. People would joke that the gold was paved with roads in Yellowknife. As a principal employer, the mines' demise left the town reeling both economically and emotionally. The tarnish on the gold soon turned to glitter when diamonds were discovered 300 km northeast of the city - a discovery that helped to heal wounds and redirect the town's energies to new opportunities.

What unfolded was the largest land grab in the Canada's history, as prospectors from all corners of the globe - eager to stake a claim - descended upon the North. In October of 1998, seven years after the initial discovery was made, Broken Hill Proprietary (BHP) of Australia opened Canada's first diamond mine.

Rationale and Significance

Today's economic developments in the NWT dwarf all previous activity to the region. Since its inception, diamond mine exports have surged threefold, trailing only Botswana and Russia in global production. The resurgence of oil and gas development as seen by the impending Mackenzie Gas Project has also sparked a similar optimistic climate (Figure 1), with forecasters predicting a multibillion dollar project in the works that will see gas piped from the Mackenzie valley to southern locales – making it the longest pipeline of its kind in the world.

Figure 1. Oil & Gas Wells Drilled, Northwest Territories, 1993-2004



Northwest Territories Bureau of Statistics, 2006

In response to these heady forecasts and ripe economic climate, financial and business analysts warn that the rise of mega-projects to the region must be accompanied by increased development of both physical and human resources before the North's bounty of riches can be fully tapped. For instance, a Toronto Dominion Bank Financial Report (Burleton, 2003), entitled: "Canada's Northwest Territories: Can Gas and Gems Bring Sustained Growth to the

North?" which was circulated amongst personnel at Aurora College warns that a labour shortage due to "a lack of skilled workers" will hamper the region's progress – a problem "exacerbated by low rates of educational attainment among the Aboriginal population." Increased provision for education is recommended, with additional funding resting on the shoulders of the territorial government (GNWT).

Accompanying the economic boom are political changes that have resulted in increased decentralization of power in the territory. Most notably, devolution and resource sharing agreements between the federal government, GNWT and aboriginal groups is occupying much of the political discourse, as each group vies for political and economic control over resources.

Presently four of six aboriginal groups have signed land claims agreements with the federal government – agreements that include land entitlement, cash payments, and in some cases control over subsurface rights. In December, 2004 the Tlicho people who live in four communities north of the Great Slave Lake, with an estimated population of 2,893 (Northwest Territories Bureau of Statistics, 2005b), settled a land claim and self government agreement which gives them control over 39, 000 square kilometers of territory, access to $152 million paid over 15 years and a share in resource royalties. Meanwhile, the Akaitcho and Dehcho people have not signed an agreement – a source of contention for both the federal and territorial governments which are caught between two competing interests: settling land claims so that an attractive investment climate can be created, while at the same time vying with the Dene for a percentage of the resource royalties that is expected to be generated from mega-projects (Neary, 2006b).

These negotiations are occurring at a time when the aboriginal population is becoming better educated and more mobile. While high school graduation rates for this

sector of the population have doubled in the past decade (see figure 2), there has been a demographic shift away from smaller, largely aboriginal communities to larger centers such as Yellowknife where job prospects are better. This urbanization trend is supported by statistics. In the past thirty years the population of Yellowknife increased from 28.6% of the territorial population in 1976 to 45.2% in 2005 (Northwest Territories Bureau of Statistics, 2006). With approximately half the population of the NWT, Yellowknife is one of the few communities where the majority of its citizens are non-aboriginal.

Figure 2. Graduates as a % of 18 Year Olds by Ethnicity Northwest Territories & Canada, 1995-2005

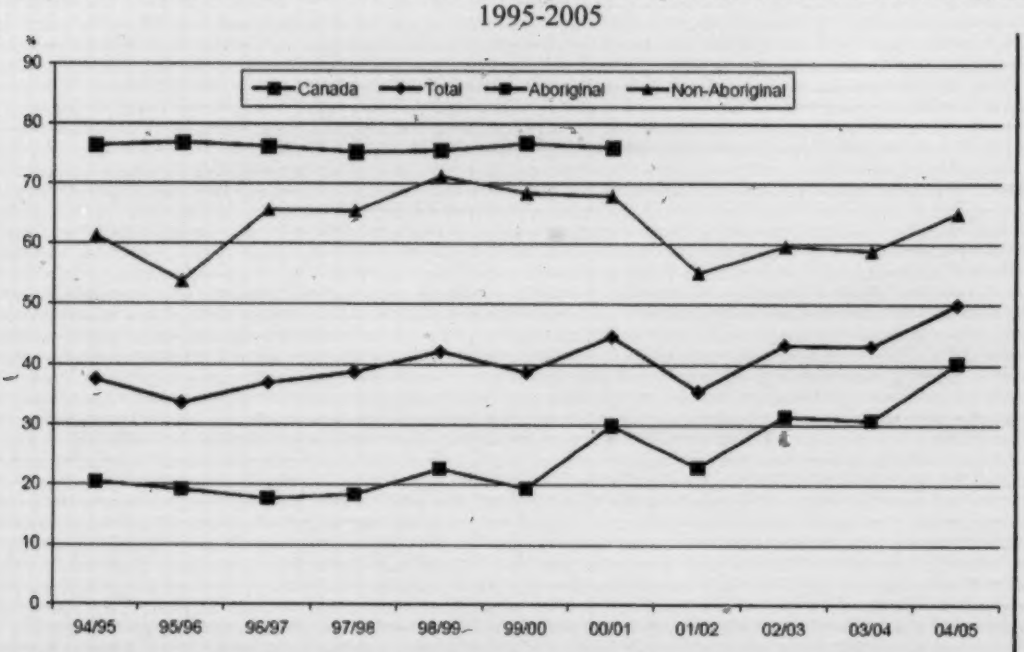


Figure 2. Rates calculated by dividing the total number of graduates by the number of 18 year olds. Number of graduates from Education Culture and Employment, while information from Bureau of Statistics.

Northwest Territories Bureau of Statistics, 2006

Not surprisingly rapid changes to the territory have also captured the interest of the academic community who see an important opportunity to conduct research that is

both timely and relevant to the needs of northerners. The Arctic Human Development Report (AHDR) recently recognized the need to support research that monitors on-going changes. Published in 2004, the report is described as "the first comprehensive assessment of human well-being that covers the entire Arctic region" (p. 3). According to the report,

> Arctic societies have a well-deserved reputation for resilience in the face of change. But today they are facing an unprecedented combination of rapid and stressful changes involving environmental processes (e.g. the impacts of climate change), cultural developments (e.g. the erosion of indigenous languages), economic changes (e.g. the emergence of narrowly based mixed economies), industrial developments (e.g. the growing role of multinational corporations engaged in the extraction of natural resources), and political changes (e.g. the devolution of political authority). (P. 10)

Coinciding with the AHDR is the International Polar Year (IPY), which represents an intensive international and interdisciplinary burst of research activity focusing attention on Polar Regions – the bulk of which will occur in 2007 and 2008. In response to this initiative, the Canadian federal government has committed over $150 million in funding to support Canadian IPY endorsed projects. This investment represents a recent departure from funding cut-backs of the 1990's and a recognition on the part of the federal government that it has been negligent in supporting northern research and meeting its national and international responsibilities in a region that comprises approximately half the country's land mass (Government of Canada, 2000).

A perusal of the IPY website (www.ipy.org) indicates the vast majority of social science proposals submitted for consideration examine the nature in which northern indigenous communities are responding to rapid changes to the region. Of notable concern are global warming and socioeconomic impacts caused by mega-projects. Commonplace terms used in these proposals include "capacity building," "resiliency" and

"holistic health indicators." These terms capture the essence of community based research projects which aim to better understand adaptive mechanisms that northern communities have in place to mitigate deleterious impacts caused by such changes.

Despite the interest shown by social scientists both in Canada and abroad, little attention has been paid to the field of education per se, or the current relationship between policy formation and resource development in the North. If we consider education as a transformative agent in the creation of sustainable community development, then the role of research regarding the nature and function of education in circumpolar communities becomes critical to the development of a wider and more nuanced analysis of impacts caused by mega-projects.

This shortfall of research is recognized by the AHDR, which states that no assessment of northern education can be made "partly because there is very little circumpolar research in the field" (p. 169). The report goes on to state, "Education policy is driven by values and interests. It is therefore important to know if some take precedence in curriculum development over others, and why" (p. 169).

Purpose and Research Question

This empirical research inquiry attempts to shed light on the question of educational values and interests posed by the AHDR by examining the influence that the current economic climate, driven by the extraction of non-renewable resources currently underway in the NWT, are having on adult education policy and program development. Specifically, the study endeavors to better understand local realities of labor market influenced educational policy and its implications on policy process and practice from the

voices of those given authority and responsibility for developing policy on behalf of northerners, and also those affected by such policies.

Guiding the inquiry is a central research question: To what degree does policy-process and practice in a region whose population is half aboriginal and ethnically-diverse reflect local aspirations, values and realities given the emphasis on vocational training geared towards an economy controlled and governed by the interests of large multinational corporations and an emerging class of aboriginal elites.

The study is premised within the wider post-development and globalization debate regarding the perceived intellectual and economic influence of powerful multinational corporations in policy related issues, and the perceived intellectual dependency of those given responsibility for social policy in the NWT. Connected to this work are theoretical considerations that examine the intersection of globalization and development on northern indigenous communities, particularly in the context of new frameworks of economic and political governance.

The intention in presenting a critical appraisal of northern development and adult education is not to deny northerners what others in Canada already have in terms of standard of living; but instead to arrive at an understanding of current policy by unearthing potential problems and in doing so provide possible ameliorative action. This quandary over economic development is described by development theorists Peet and Hartwick (1999) who state,

> …development contains a real quest for improving the human condition, but one perverted by class power and ruling ideologies. There should be a struggle to reorient this practice rather than dismissing the entire modern developmental project as a negative power play. (p. 161)

In response, both theorists opt for a "postcolonial postdevelopmentalism" open to dialogue with a critical modernism. The research inquiry espouses a similar framework despite tensions implicit in combining tenets of postdevelopmentalism with those of modernity.

Aurora College

Aurora College provides the logical focal point for this study as the college plays an important role in education, training and employment for many northern students – the majority of whom are aboriginal. As the unofficial training arm of the GNWT, the college mandate is to deliver community-centered post-secondary programs in preparation for the northern labour market. Given this focus, questions concerning the manner in which the college has responded to the pressures of mega-project development need to be examined. For instance, has program expansion been evenly distributed or focused in just one area? Has the college received subsidies and support by private industry to develop programs? If so, how has this impacted other programs being offered? These questions will be used to support the central research question and help to situate the research within the existing socio-political and cultural context.

In order to gain insight into these questions, a qualitative research inquiry involving an open-ended interview format was chosen for this study. Interviews were conducted during the summer of 2005 and involved policy planners located at the three regional campuses in Inuvik, Yellowknife and Fort Smith. Other stakeholders involved in northern development were also interviewed in an effort to provide a more nuanced and balanced perspective.

The inquiry also recognizes that attention must be paid towards historical antecedents of northern education and development in order that a contemporary understanding of social forces that shape the present context can be addressed. A perusal of the Arctic Human Development Report (AHDR) indicates that many factors are driving changes in Canada's North, including heightened interest in resource development and the devolution of provincial-type responsibilities to territorial governments, including administration and control over public land, water and resources. These socio-political factors will be examined in relation to adult education.

Furthermore, efforts to capture economic rents from mega-projects are cited by the AHDR as an indicator of human development that represents "special features of life in the Arctic" (p. 17). Considering these "special features" of Arctic life, the research will link socio-political impacts of mega-project developments to implications for adult education policy and planning. Theoretical considerations regarding the role of education as a pillar in fostering and maintaining principles of democratic governance will be incorporated into the analysis.

Organization of the Thesis

The balance of this thesis is organized into four chapters. Chapter 2 presents a review of literature related to historical developments in northern adult education, along with socio-political developments that shape the present context. Theoretical considerations that analyze education as a function of state formation and capital accumulation are discussed as a means of deliberating on provision for adult education within the existing socio-political context, shaped largely by mega-project development.

Chapter 3 provides a rationale for the methodology chosen. A description of methods used to gather data is presented here. Chapter 4 presents findings from interviews and other key documents that relate to perceptions shared. The second half of this chapter provides an analysis of findings using theoretical considerations and literature covered in the second chapter. The thesis concludes with a summary of salient points that emerged from the findings. A series of questions provide a further means of reflection, which are then posited in the form of recommendations and future research possibilities.

CHAPTER II

A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Chapter Introduction

As McLean (1997) notes, the political-economic transformation of aboriginal people from autonomous hunters and gatherers to small-scale commodity producers dependent on trading furs, and then to persons dependent on wage labour and transfer payments, is a familiar history (p. 5). Documentation supporting this transformation in the NWT has been recorded both by academics (Asch, 1977, 1982; Dacks, 1981; Dickerson, 1992; Hamilton, 1994; Morrison, 1998; Page, 1989) and aboriginal northerners (Blondin, 2005; *Denendeh, A Dene Celebration*, 1984; Maldaver, n.d.).

Within this context, the North is popularly referred to as "internal colonies" (Dacks, 1981; McLean, 1997; Watkins, 1977) or "federal fiscal colonies" (Banta, 2006) of Canada. This reference attributes political control of the region by non-indigenous governments for purposes of profiteering from the extraction of resources, with little socio-economic benefit accruing to the indigenous people of the region. It is argued that by increasing revenues through fair resource sharing agreements the North will be better able to effectively combat symptoms of poverty plaguing many of its communities.

What has not been adequately recognized in existing literature is a contemporary analysis of socio-political developments going beyond the popular discourse of the North as internal colony. A review of literature that examines self-governance agreements that have formed in response to the current economic boom helps provide insight into changing political dynamics and implications these changes have on educational policy

formation. Within this context, theoretical considerations pertaining to northern state formation are incorporated into the analysis as a means of providing a framework to understand the present context and its policy implications for adult education, training and employment.

Historical Overview of Education in the Northwest Territories

Reflected in the North's history are educational policies that closely mirror political events. Most notably, policy shifted from a pre World War II period characterized by "benign neglect" (Dickerson, 1992) to that of active state intervention thereafter.

During the first part of the twentieth century the NWT was administered by a handful of senior administrators in Ottawa. They only had to contend with the Church and trading companies as political forces. The Church who ran day and residential schools was more concerned with Christian indoctrination than school reform. Meanwhile trading companies had a vested interest in maintaining the status quo, as a traditional bush life was conducive to the acquisition of furs. Consequently, there was little political will on the part of Ottawa to intervene, at a time when pre-war governments were reeling from the ravages of the Depression. Policy was then two-fold:

> While they [federal government] pushed the development of resources of the region as rapidly as possible, at the same time, they tried to keep Native people essentially living a traditional way of life. It was almost as if they established two worlds – the world of resource development and the world of the Native people and rarely did these two worlds meet. (Dickerson, 1992, p. 57)

While the period prior to World War II is characterized by policies that encouraged a traditional bush life, the post-war period leading up to the late 1960's is considered to represent colonialism - manifested in the arrival of a bureaucratic state

apparatus. Several reasons are provided for the intensification of Canadian governments activities in the North: the perceived need to maintain sovereignty in the North in light of the Cold War and American military involvement in the region; public criticism of the Canadian government in neglecting the plight of aboriginal peoples when the fur trade collapsed; and increased resource development in the territory made possible by improvements to transportation (Dickerson, 1992; Hamilton, 1994; McLean, 1997). The culmination of these activities resulted in the establishment of permanent communities in the North, necessitating the arrival of civil servants to provide health, education and welfare services.

During this time, the federal government consolidated and secularized the school system and embarked on an ambitious campaign of providing formal education. Government policy shifted towards encouraging aboriginal people to participate in the wage economy, which was primarily geared towards the extraction of non-renewable resources. The intent then was to provide vocational training in order for aboriginal northerners to make this transition into the work force at a time when trapping and trading furs was no longer a viable enterprise.

While school construction soared (40 new schools were built during 1955-1965) school retention was a dismal failure (Dickerson, 1992); so too was participation in the labour force. In 1963, only 16 per cent of the aboriginal potential labour force was wage earners, while the figure for non-aboriginals was 65 per cent (Dickerson, p. 82). Current statistics indicates the overall employment rate has exceeded 50% and 80% for these respective groups, with the majority of employment (39%) derived from the government sector (Northwest Territories Bureau of Statistics, 2006).

Adult Education

The construction of schools wasn't only for children; they also provided necessary infrastructure for adult education. On May, 11, 1948, the NWT Deputy Commissioner wrote:

> All new schools planned for the erection in the N.W.T. are designed to function not only as school plants but as community centres. These buildings are being so constructed that by means of folding door partitions they can be rapidly converted into small auditoriums for purposes of community interest. The whole educational program is being drawn up with the aim in view that the adult population may share in special radio programs, film showings, sport activities, handicrafts, clubs of various types, and night school instruction. Special welfare teachers are being selected and sent into new schools with the object that the may give leadership to the community. (cited in McLean, 1997, p. 9)

However, it was not until the 1960's when the first state agency responsible for adult education in the North was established. At the time, provision for adult education was menial, with few staffing positions made available and classes held only in the evenings (McLean, 1997). In the following decade significant resources supported the formal establishment of adult education. By 1974, the GNWT established permanent positions for adult educators in 26 of the 60 settlements, located both in the western (present day NWT) and eastern Arctic (present-day Nunavut) (Lidster, 1978).

In 1978, the Supervisor of Adult Education Programs for the NWT Department of Education asserted,

> Citizens of the Northwest Territories have learning needs that must be met in order for them to function in a changing society, it is imperative that learning opportunities be made available for individuals in order to provide them with information and skills enabling them to cope with change and make choices affecting their lives. (Lidster, 1978, p. 5)

The underlying philosophy at this time placed emphasis on responding to the needs of the community as "resource people" by "facilitating" rather than "promoting"

programs, as it was felt that a "community-generated" approach would intrinsically motivate people to learn skills important to them.

Despite these emancipatory platitudes, contradictions in practice clearly existed. Instead of being responsive to community needs, priorities were administered in a paternalistic top-down fashion. As the following passage illustrates, education as a legitimized field of intervention contributed towards a vicious cycle of dependency rather than the original intention of establishing self-sufficiency:

> Until recently, say five-ten years ago, decisions came easily to the native northerner of the Mackenzie Valley. As full-time trappers and hunters they made life and death decisions for their families in the course of everyday living. For the most part the wind and weather shaped their lifestyle. But now there are decisions that these people have to make and therein lies the confusion. And the weather signs will not help them. The native northerners want some help with their decisions and Adult Education is a start towards that help. (Lidster, 1978, p. 140).

Paternalism on the part of adult educators also conspired to produce normalizing effects through the establishment of programs designed to assist aboriginal people into modernity. "Life skills" defined as "problem solving behaviors appropriately used in the management of personal affairs" (Lidster, 1978, p. 179) along with "home management" programs "concerned with the quality of life in the home," whose purpose was to "help adults retain and attain those wholesome elements that they desire in their home and family life" (p. 180) were taught. Similar programs (e.g. "Job Readiness") are still being offered at Aurora College to help aboriginal northerners adjust to lifestyle changes related to employment. For example, in rotational shift work at remote diamond mines where employees must leave their families for extended periods of time.

While the philosophy of adult educator as culturally sensitive learning facilitator was meant to permeate the very essence of a harmonious community-based adult education system, problems of tardiness, boredom, absenteeism, alcohol, and mothers bringing disruptive children to class are cited as interfering with the learning process (Lidster, 1978, p. 135). These references to learning barriers indicate the challenges of providing formal education within a cross-cultural context. They also illustrate the failure of colonial efforts to build capacity once traditional patterns of communal self-reliance are subverted. As one educator lamented,

> We are privately troubled by the 'pie in the sky' attitude on the part of many young people here regarding government money. Many seem to take for granted that they will be taken care of no matter what. This creates an approach to life that divides them from older people and makes them feel purposeless. The government and church have disrupted their early lives, separating them from their homes and traditions. (Lidster, 1978, p. 138)

Creation of the College System

In 1981, the interim report of the NWT Special Committee on Education found the majority of funding for education was spent on "in-school programs" with little left over for adult education (McLean, 1997). From these findings came the necessary impetus to re-prioritize funding, resulting in the creation of a multi-campus institution responsible for post-school programs.

In 1984, Arctic College was created, including campuses in Iqaluit and Fort Smith. Later that decade (1987), the college became a corporate entity with a board of governors. The same year, it was agreed that Community Learning Centers across the North would join the college system – a process that was completed in 1990. In June 1992, the head office of Arctic College was moved from the capital city of Yellowknife to Fort Smith as part of the government's decentralization strategy. At the time it was

perceived that by being removed from the capital, the college would be less prone to political influence and interference. It was also thought that locating college policy planners to a smaller community would help foster greater understanding and responsiveness to the needs of rural residents (Government of the Northwest Territories, 1989).

In 1995 Arctic College was divided into Aurora College, in present day NWT, and Nunavut Arctic College. Today, Aurora College serves approximately 600 full time students and

> ...is the primary delivery agent for adult and postsecondary education in the Northwest Territories. Its programs are designed to address the needs of the Northern workforce and economy, and include basic adult education, skilled-based training, certificate, diploma and degree programming. These programs are offered at the three campuses in Inuvik, Fort Smith and Yellowknife, as well as community learning centers in most NWT communities. (Government of the Northwest Territories, 2005, pp. 14, 15)

The corporate plan (2001-2005) for the College also states:

> The challenges we face today arise not only from political change with the creation of two territories from the old NWT, but from economic change as well. The new industry, and the resurgent oil and gas industry, are developing into leading employers. Preparing Northerners for participation in these industries and other new opportunities is the mandate of Aurora College. (Government of the Northwest Territories, n.d. a, p. 8)

Recent Political Developments

Efforts by northerners to reclaim political, economic and cultural control began in the late 1960's at a time when the seat of government moved from Ottawa to Yellowknife. However, this symbolic gesture towards devolution did little to assuage discontent amongst northern aboriginals who began to politically organize themselves in

response to being persistently ignored by a government that did not represent their interests.

Several reasons are cited in the literature as catalyzing moves towards the politicization of northern aboriginal groups. These include reaction to the Trudeau Government's White Paper (1969) which sought to abolish special status for aboriginal people under the Indian Act (Dickerson, 1992); the Berger Inquiry into the proposed Mackenzie Valley Pipeline (1975), which galvanized mainstream support for northern aboriginal peoples' rights in light of oil and gas development to the region (Hamilton, 1998; Page, 1977); and the emergence of a northern cadre of educated aboriginal elite that could effectively challenge the existing hegemony (Morrison, 1998).

The goals of self-government for the Dene, Inuvialuit and Metis include the settlement of land claims, cultural preservation and economic development (Dickerson, 1992). For the Dene, these are enshrined in the Dene Declaration (1975), which includes: inherent right to self-determination; right to traditional lands; and special status under the Canadian constitution (*Denedeh: A Dene Celebration*, 1984). Following this declaration the federal government agreed to negotiate separate land claims with the different Aboriginal groups of the territory. As Dickerson explains,

> The Dene and Metis live under the shadow of treaties 8 and 11 – since the mid 1970's the feds have said the claims issue must be resolved. Native people want the lands they own or control clarified so that they can get on with development with some sense of permanence. The federal government, with one eye to resource development and another eye to the growing legality of Aboriginal claims, would like to establish certainty with regard to land distribution. Land claim settlements will clear the air for even greater resource development. (p. 164)

Power is now shared in a triad between aboriginal groups, the GNWT, and the federal government. Much of the political discourse associated with these changes involves what is termed "devolution and resource revenue sharing" - agreements that involve industry and aboriginal, territorial and federal governments. Similar to when the seat of government was moved from Ottawa to Yellowknife in 1967, devolution provides further means of creating conditions for local autonomy and greater control over health, education, justice and other areas of governance.

Aboriginal groups and the GNWT see the recent economic boom as providing the necessary impetus to negotiate a greater share in royalty revenues - the bulk of which has traditionally traveled out of the territory to shareholders in the south. Added revenue it is argued (Banta, 2006; Cizek, 2005) will effectively end the "natural resource curse,"

> where oil or gas or mining can generate enormous wealth, yet the resource rich regions too often have poor economic growth, inadequate investment in health, education, and sanitation and low levels of child welfare because the resource wealth is diverted elsewhere. (Banta, 2006, p. A19)

Presently, the Northwest Territories collectively suffers from an inordinately low resource royalty regime compared to other jurisdictions in the country and abroad – making it one of the lowest rates in the world. For example, between 1998 and 2004 the federal government collected almost $120 million in oil and gas royalties at an average rate of 5.4% (Cizek, 2005). According to Petr Cizek, "If the current Alberta rate of 30% had been applied, over $600 million in royalties would have been collected" (p. 1). Royalties in the mining sector are similar. For example, royalties received from diamond mining by the federal government was 6.5% in 2004 as compared to Botswana which received 50% in equity and profit sharing from the DeBeers diamond mines (p. 17).

These discrepancies have been attributed to site-specific factors and general economic factors. The former affects the costs of exploration, development and production and the latter includes resource price and cost of attracting investment capital (Strategic Value Services, 2005, p. 2). It is argued that the greater share of economic rent taken by industry is necessary to attract industry to the North, which is relatively unexplored, lacks infrastructure and has harsh physical conditions (p. 4).

Considering the low royalty regime and the fact that the federal government is the sole collector of revenues from northern royalties, it is not surprising that much of the debate concerning devolution in the territorial legislative assembly involves controlling a share in an effort to raise the standard of living for northerners. These issues have also been brought to the attention of the public through a myriad of media (e.g. Banta, 2006; McCauley, October 10, 2005; Jaremko, January 25, 2006; Neary, 2006b; Vanderpike, 2005), government (e.g. Government of the Northwest Territories, 2005) and non-governmental organization reports and publications (e.g. Cizek, 2005). Aboriginal groups have also produced publications (e.g. Mackenzie Valley Aboriginal Pipeline Limited Partnership, n.d.; NWT Aboriginal Summit, 2006) in an effort to highlight their own position and stake in these claims.

Education Partnerships in the New North

Recent political developments have resulted in a close alliance between education and the market. Of particular note, in the evolution of northern adult education, is the creation of Aurora College as a corporation in the late 1980's. This new status enables the college to receive funds directly from the private sector to deliver programs tailored to meet the

needs of business. At the same time it also helps alleviate costs incurred by the GNWT as the sole provider for education. As one government report explains,

> As the Arctic College corporation grows and develops it is expected that non-government sponsored programs will represent an increasing proportion of the Arctic College activity. However, given the nature of the Northwest Territories economy it is probable that education and training programs paid for by government, both territorial and federal, will continue to represent the largest share of the Arctic College revenue and expenditures. (Government of the Northwest Territories, 1989, p. 10)

Similarly, the territorial education report, *People: Our Focus and Future* (Government of the Northwest Territories, 1994) states: "The gap between the demand and the available resources will create a major deficit in funding for adult training" (p. 72). In response, "various organizations" must work together to support programming (p. 72). The report states that a continued demand for community based training is a direct result of land claim settlements and self-government initiatives (p. 70).

A decade later, third party funding is still at the forefront of the GNWT education agenda. Recent data from Statistics Canada (cited in Neary, 2006a) indicates that of the 43.1 million dollars allocated for funding vocational training in the NWT, 85% (or $36.7 million) comes from government sources. Given employment in the oil, gas and mining industries collectively comprises 9% - a figure that is five times the national average (Cizek, 2005; Northwest Territories Bureau of Statistics, 2006) – it is not surprising that the GNWT has developed a new strategy to help finance education.

The most recent territorial education report (Government of the Northwest Territories, 2004), entitled, *Building on Our Success* states:

> While it is true that ECE [Department of Education, Culture and Employment], and the GNWT as a whole, must be strategic in its investments, there is constant pressure to increase commitment to adult education and training. This is particularly true in

> relation to resource sectors where the demand for skilled workers in the oil and gas fields and diamond mines has had a significant impact on priorities and expenditures. Partnerships with industry, Aboriginal governments, and other agencies have increased to meet the demand, but they often have cost sharing implications involving long-term commitments for governments. (p. 42)

These initiatives represent an important philosophical shift in northern economic development, as resource companies are now required to hire a set number of aboriginal northerners to benefit the local economy. Decision-making now involves a diversity of stakeholders who have a mutual interest in training and recruiting aboriginal northerners to work in non-renewable resource extraction industries. In doing so, hiring quotas stipulated by impact and benefit agreements (IBAs) signed between aboriginal groups and industry, can be met.

In response, various groups have strategically positioned themselves to maximize benefits of proposed (Mackenzie Gas Project) and current (diamond mines) mega-projects. Examples of these groups include the Aboriginal Pipeline Group and the Mine Training Society.

The Aboriginal Pipeline Group (APG), located in Inuvik, is a consortium of aboriginal groups (Sahtu, Gwich'in and Inuvialuit) having a one-third share in a "business partnership" with other pipeline owners involved with the Mackenzie Gas Project. This arrangement is unique as APG receives a risk-free loan for construction costs that don't have to be repaid if the venture fails to proceed. Other loans are borrowed from banks and are then repaid once profit generated by transportation fees from producers are made; the more gas that is shipped, the greater the profit. Once loans are repaid, APG pays revenues as a dividend to its shareholders who are then free to use the money as they see fit (*History in the Making*, n.d.).

To maximize benefits for aboriginal northerners, APG in conjunction with Aurora College and its industry partners has formed the Petroleum Operators Training Committee to create training programs in the oil and gas industries. Federal funding through the Aboriginal Skills and Employment Partnership (ASEP) has been allocated for these purposes. ASEP comprises a three year, 12 million dollar allocation, which according to the federal government, represents a "commitment to work with Aboriginal groups and other stakeholders to provide high quality, culturally relevant education for Aboriginal learners, to help them to achieve their educational needs and aspirations" (Human Resources and Social Development Canada, 2005).

Similarly, the Mine Training Society, located in Yellowknife is a consortium of industry (Diavik Diamond Mines Inc., De Beers Canada Mining Inc., BHP Billiton), government (GNWT/Aurora College) and aboriginal groups (Yellowknives Dene First Nation, Tli Cho Government, Lutsel K'e Dene Council and North Slave Métis Alliance). Like the Petroleum Operators Group, the society has a similar mandate and funding support, with its focus on mine-related trades. As Leon Lafferty, Chair of the society stated, "We won't train anyone unless we know that this training is directly linked to a mining industry job. Our training model will respond directly to the needs of industry, as identified by industry" (Human Resources and Social Development Canada, 2005).

These groups have had a tangible effect on education, training and employment in the region. According to one report (Neary, 2006b) the Mine Training Society has helped 1,000 beneficiaries (Tlicho and Yellowknives Dene) get training and another 380 aboriginal people find positions in the mining industry. It has also played a role in

establishing a trades and technology program at the high school in Bechoko, located near Yellowknife.

Other schools in the territory have also followed suit with their own trade centers that are supported by corporate sponsors. For example the Kimberlite Career and Technical Centre (Yellowknife Catholic Schools) – a $1.5 million center has enrolled more than 200 students from Grade 7 through college since its inception in 2004. Programs include welding, carpentry, cosmetology, small-engine mechanics and other trades studies (Neary, 2006b). Interestingly, the center offers programs for women only, which are considered an untapped labour force (Markey, 2005).

Adding to the diffuse network of adult learning institutions is the private sector. Presently the two operating diamond mines (BHP and Diavik) in the territory offer academic upgrading at their mine sites for employees. Private postsecondary institutions in Yellowknife also offer trades and skill based training (e.g. Academy of Learning, Sprott Shaw Community College).

Despite these positive trends, aboriginal people are still under-represented in non-renewable resource extraction industries with 70% of employees occupying low skill or unskilled occupations (Northwest Territories Bureau of Statistics, 2005c). These statistics are commensurate with education levels and dropout patterns experienced in the North.

The position of the GNWT is to encourage students to stay in school and complete their education, as it is recognized Grade 12 academic skills are essential for ensuring success in labour market training (Government of the Northwest Territories, 2001). As Jake Ootes, former Minister for Education in the NWT explains:

> We're finding a lot of people are in the education system, but are dropping out at some point, say Grade 9, Grade 10. What happens with a lot of these people is they come back into the system. In some cases, through adult education, or through (Aurora) college with access programs. (Bryant, 2002)

These comments provide insight to the somewhat inversely proportional relationship that currently exists between increasing participation in education and that of the workforce. As school dropouts re-enter adult education programs later in life, career choices made available to them are limited to those found in the trades and services – areas that don't require much formal education. Currently, less than 5% of aboriginal northerners hold a university degree (Northwest Territories Bureau of Statistics, 2006). Therefore, non-aboriginals, most of whom are non-indigenous to the territory, fill middle management and professional positions.

Theoretical Considerations

Marxian theories of state formation and hegemony developed by Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937) provide a useful framework for understanding the manner in which post-secondary institutions have positioned themselves with respect to the pressure of resource development. From these analyses, an assessment of state formation within a northern context can be made – one that pays particular attention to the cultural exigencies of northern aboriginal peoples.

Gramsci divided modern society into the state, civil society, and the market - divisions that can also be respectively referred to as government, the voluntary sector and economic sector. Within this tripartite scheme, the state is broadly defined as "the entire complex of practical and theoretical activities with which the ruling class not only justifies and maintains its dominance, but manages to win the active consent of those over whom it rules" (Green, 1990, p. 93). Civil society on the other hand is considered an

"ensemble of organisms commonly called private" comprised of grassroots voluntary organizations such as churches, schools and unions (Murphy, 2001, p. 351).

Within a modern capitalist society, aspirations of the state are closely aligned with those of the market: Values of the market must permeate civil society in order for the ruling class - whose interests are orchestrated through the state - to maintain its position of control. Gramsci notes divisions between the state and civil society are in fact illusory - an illusion that must be maintained in order for the state to exist. As Green (1990) puts it, "The state works through civil society since one of its primary functions is to mould and educate society at all levels in conformity with its own historical goals" (p. 93).

This explanation of the modern state introduces us to the nature in which power operates within it. According to Green (1990),

> A hegemonic order represents a temporary settlement, the ideological balance of force of the ruling class, not the homogenous substance of an imposed class ideology. It is won through continual conflict which involves the creation of alliances, the attempted incorporation of subordinate groups and, even, the granting of concessions so long as these do not damage the vital interests of the dominant group. (p. 94)

Northern State Formation

Gramsci's definition of hegemony is both prescient and portentous considering the "creation of alliances" through "the attempted incorporation of subordinate groups" and the "granting of concessions" which has taken place with respect to northern development.

If we consider current efforts underway in the NWT to promote skill based training we see that adult education must negotiate between incompatibilities of economic development on the one hand and cultural preservation on the other – a paradox contained within the goals of aboriginal self-government. While devolution and

resource sharing agreements address the first two goals (land claims and economic development), the third goal - cultural preservation - while arguably implied in the first two, gets short shrift with respect to program policy and planning. This is not to say that institutions like Aurora College are not providing opportunities in these areas such as self-governance (see Scott, 2005), cultural preservation (e.g. "Traditional Arts Certificate" and aboriginal languages), or infusing regular programs such as the nursing or the teacher education programs with cultural elements. Yet it is the pace of development and shear magnitude of the projects underway that has arguably deformed holistic strategies for self-governance as articulated in the Dene Declaration.

In their assessment of Canada-wide aboriginal postsecondary education, Richardson and Blanchett-Cohen (2000) state: "In the face of land claims and treaty negotiations, education has often been placed on the back burner; insufficient attention has been given to ensure that the education of Aboriginal peoples meets the future needs of the community" (p. 183). At first glance, a simple solution to this problem would be to inject funding received from royalty revenues generated from mega-project development into education. However, such a strategy may in fact create conditions that contribute towards a *neocolonial* "resource curse" if we consider the current relationship that has evolved between industry and various forms of governance.

In order to understand why education has been put on the "back burner," the present socio-political context which has contributed towards such neglect must be considered. Since the late 1960's political organization for aboriginal people has increasingly focused on models of economic development that generate capital by "renting" out traditional lands to non-renewable resource industries. In the aftermath of

the Berger Inquiry (1978) into the proposed Mackenzie Gas Pipeline discussion over economic development models that would best promote a "mixed economy"– one reliant on wage labour to fund a traditional, subsistence lifestyle – were debated.

In his article "Critical Appraisal of the Berger Inquiry," anthropologist Michael Asch (1982) makes a case for supporting a position the Dene put forward during the hearings. This position supports economic development through the collection of rents generated from the use of traditional lands by non-renewable resource extraction industries. Unlike Berger, who recommended economic development through government grants, Asch saw rents as an autonomous vehicle to promote a "mixed economy" through less obtrusive forms of capital accumulation, as monies could be dispersed by aboriginal people themselves. Government grants it was argued are "formulated within an economic context that assumes the institutions and values of capitalism" (p. 6), thus tying aboriginal people to terms and conditions that would erode their traditional way of life.

Asch (1982) concedes passive forms of capital accumulation in the form of rent may supplant traditional egalitarianism, as class divisions could occur – a situation that would conceivably undermine the original intent of the goal. Instead of putting rent money towards economic diversification designed to bolster a traditional lifestyle, Asch states "Native people may voluntarily choose short-term cash benefits rather than forego these gains to create the capital base necessary to construct the kind of economy they say they want and thus to ensure in the process that such an economy is never built" (p. 7).

Since the time Asch made his recommendations, theories critiquing current aboriginal political economy have been developed. New Zealand academic Elizabeth

Rata (2005) explains recent politicization of the Maori has resulted in the emergence of "neotribal capitalism" controlled by a "neotribal elite." Rata argues that neotribal capitalism, now a global phenomenon, has created unsustainable conditions owing to the undemocratic system of governance that still exists along kinship lines.

According to Rata, "neotribes" operate from a fundamentally different socio-political structure than their forebears did during pre-contact times when redistributive economies existed. Atavistic political structures governing neotribes today is fundamentally incompatible with contemporary land use, which is based on capitalisable property ownership. As a result, "retribalisation" has created conditions whereby the neotribes are in fact "economic corporations" rather than democratic governing bodies. Members of the tribe, instead of acting in the capacity of independent citizens, are reified along ethnic lines. As Rata explains,

> By linking resources to traditional leadership the ruling class of neotribal capitalism controls both the tribal economy and politics. There is not the separation between the economic and political systems which defines democracy and that creates the institutional site (parliament and government) for the peaceful battle between contesting class interests. (p. 9)

Similarly, northern economic development has been likened to a "rentier state" (Widdowson, 2005). Originally, developed with respect to Iran, the concept of "rentier state" explains how "a windfall of wealth of unprecedented magnitude" in a short period of time conditions political behaviour and development policies (Beblawi, 1987, cited in Widdowson, p. 8).

It is in the direct connection to mega-project development that these theories become especially relevant, as large infusion of rent enables governments to embark upon capital intensive development projects that offer short term employment for the state.

Similar to Rata's explanation of a "neotribal elite," rentier states produce a "rentier class". Any opposition mounted against the "rentier class" is concerned primarily with the redistribution of rent *rather* than actually increasing productivity of the workforce. This is because, citizenship "becomes a source of economic benefit" (Beblawi, cited in Widdowson, p. 9) – a condition that effectively co-opts members of the tribe. In turn, a "rentier mentality" develops and permeates the whole society, as attitudes towards increasing productivity are eclipsed by a mentality that "isolates position and reward from their causal relationship with talent and work" (Yates, 1996, cited in Widdowson, p. 11). Consequently, "contracts are given as an expression of gratitude rather than as a reflection of economic rationale" (Yates, cited in Widdowson, p. 11).

These theories not only serve to explain observations made by Blanchet-Cohen and Richardson (2000) with respect to prioritizing aboriginal post-secondary education; they also provide insight into potential rifts created between tribal leadership and its members with respect to participation in mega-projects. While the extraction of rent from mega-projects is the principal preoccupation of the "neotribal elite" or "rentier class," tribal members become guaranteed sinecures in these same industries through entry-level positions. Meanwhile, non-aboriginals who primarily occupy middle management, skilled positions inadvertently create a wedge between a subservient workforce and a leadership colluding with the interests of the market. From this standpoint, it appears that caveats put forth by Asch (1982) concerning corrosive effects of rent trump possible benefits that such "autonomous" capital accumulation may create.

However, it could also be argued aboriginal groups are forced to take a pragmatic approach to economic development and employment considering the present post

colonial context in which they must operate. Given low formal education levels and skills required to generate autonomous forms of wealth, combined with the vast distances required to bring exports to market, northern aboriginal peoples are compelled to rent out the land to multi-national corporations. This is because large corporations contain transportable economies of scale and expertise. This enables effective operation in remote regions to occur while at the same time turning a profit. Paying rent and offering incentives through commitments to local training and hiring therefore is part of the cost of doing business – a quid pro quo that provides employment and income for depressed regions.

From these competing perspectives, notions of hegemony become less transparent and more complex than discourse pertaining to "internal colony" or "natural resource curse" would have it. Post-development theories which specifically address adult education provide further insight into how market forces have undermined this crucial facet of civil society. Possible ameliorative action is also provided in this analysis.

A Gramscian Analysis of Adult Education

Gramsci's theories of state formation and hegemony have been used by some theorists (Cunningham, 2000; Mayo, 1999; Murphy, 2001) to understand the present commodification of adult education. These theorists argue adult educators face a moral dilemma of choosing to either serve the needs of the market through provision of vocational training, or instead strengthen civil society through education promoting the development of a critical consciousness. In order to restore balance to society, educators must actively take steps towards redressing the historical and ideological forces that have

increasingly lead to locating their practice within the realm of the market. It is in the realm of civil society - in what Peter Mayo (1999) describes as a "vast and amorphous arena of struggle" (p. 6) - that exist possibilities for restoring principles of democratic governance through transformative, counter hegemonic education.

In a similar vein other theorists (Federighi,1997; Harris,1996; Korsgaard, 1997; Stromquist, & Monkman, 2000) turn their attention to the unprecedented nature in which economic globalization has undermined the autonomy of nation-states. These theorists argue the increasing concentration of wealth created by transnational corporations has rendered nation-state borders and the economies contained within them permeable and susceptible to both the vagaries of the market and machinations of a corporate elite. As national boundaries become increasingly fluid, Keynesian policies of national economics are dismantled, resulting in what Korsgaard (1997) describes as "a loss of effectiveness of national policies in the sphere of welfare" (p. 19).

For capitalists, relationships are simple: companies will maximize profits in regions where there is skilled labor. In return for providing industry with skilled workers, host nations gain employment for their citizens. However, this deal comes with a catch, as the needs of the market are placed before those of the community. As Reich (1993) explains: "Since training is mostly devoted to those who are part of the formal economy, and since this no longer has strict national boundaries, training the labour force will, at most, enrich a network of financial corporations scattered all over the world, rather than the nations that have invested in the training" (cited in Federighi, 1997, p. 10). In the end, it is society that gets the short end of the stick. This is not to say participation in a wage economy is necessarily a bad thing in and of itself. However, a balance must be struck

between the needs of the market and those of civil society, if democratic institutions are to remain robust.

The magnitude of economic development and the degree to which education has become a factory-styled production line, pumping out *skilled workers* ready to enter the work force has implications for culture. Instead of focusing on the development of the individual, education becomes a gateway into the global market. In turn, ideals of social justice and personal development give way to a discourse of "competition, quality and productivity" (Korsgaard, 1997, p. 18). From this perspective, "the state has been complicit with the market to assure economic growth, even at the expense of its own citizenry" (Murphy, cited in Cunningham, 2000, p. 575) – a condition the Canadian system has increasingly acquiesced to despite its historical allegiance to an education centered on moral alternatives to the market (Welton, cited in Korsgaard).

Still others (Abdi, 2001; Cunningham, 2000; McLean, 1997; Wilson, 1999) claim a Marxian analysis of adult education can be made more inclusive for marginalized groups, by incorporating a poststructuralist account of identity politics. The current emphasis on vocational learning, based on a need to train a labour force not only has implications for class structure but also identity formation. This is because a liberal model of adult education focusing on the productivity of the individual is *a*historical in nature, "as if the social context in which we all exist does not affect the process of education" (Cunningham, 2000, p. 573). Consequently it's claimed, "Many citizens have no concept of social allegiance to the society that provides them their identity, their culture, their humanity" (p. 587), producing what Brazilian popular educationalist Paulo Freire (1983) termed, "historical amnesia."

Alienating individuals from their ontological moorings is also seen in the changing role of the worker: "The rhetoric of lifelong learning is now often aligned with various national and economic efforts to enhance global competitiveness by drawing upon the 'resource' of 'flexible' or 'sculpted' workforces" (Wilson, 1999) – something which has been commented on by northern policy planners. As Kerry Robinson, manager of program development at Aurora College states: "The workforce is very mobile. It's different than it was 20 years ago" (Ryan, 2006, p. A14).

As Wilson (1999) argues, adult educators are complicit in fostering the disempowerment of learners while at the same time creating relationships of dependency to the very powers they now enthusiastically serve, resulting in what Gramsci calls normalized power relations. Cultivating a society of dependent learners through a hegemonic discourse of putative learner needs, helps to perpetuate the self-reproducing nature of the status quo in which seemingly apolitical institutions (colleges, newspapers, church groups, etc) operate under the banner of democracy while concomitantly catering to the market.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Ontology

This empirical research inquiry uses an interpretive framework in the overall context of qualitative methodology, as a means of uncovering perceptions shared by stakeholders of northern adult education. Central to this paradigm is the notion that "reality can never be fully apprehended, only approximated, relying on multiple methods for a way of capturing as much reality as possible" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, p. 8). In this sense, knowledge is socially constructed and contextual, existing in the minds of participants and exercised collectively in the formation of policy. Using an inductive methodology, a multiplicity of meaning is brought to light through competing positions presented by a diverse array of stakeholders. Guiding this process is a critical theoretical orientation that allows opportunity for praxis as well as generalizations to be formed.

An interpretive paradigm recognizes that knowledge is constructed through a dialogical interaction between researcher and participants. The Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle aptly describes this dynamic by stating, "What we observe is not nature itself, but nature exposed to our method of questioning" (Pickard & Dixon para. 5, 2004). Or as Barone (1992) puts it, "'Reality' resides neither with an objective external world nor with the subjective mind of the knower, but within dynamic transaction between the two" (cited in Greene, 1998, p. 384). Data gathering therefore becomes part of the research process itself, as the researcher unwittingly imposes a context shaped by gender, ethnicity, ideology and methodology - all of which impacts and shapes outcomes. This subjective nature of inquiry recognizes limitations placed on the research design and

accepts that "Interpretivist knowledge claims are contestable precisely because they are contextualized and multiplistic, and also because they represent an intertwinement of facts and values" (Greene, p. 385).

Epistemology

Jurgen Habermas, arguably the most important critical theorist of our time provides a useful explanation of knowledge to guide the inquiry. Habermas outlines three basic epistemological orientations governing particular interests: empirical knowledge in the form of facts and generalizations; situational and interpretive knowledge produced through communication with others; and a critical reflective knowledge oriented towards emancipation from oppression (*Knowledge and Human Interests*, 1972, cited in Carson, 1992). Historically, these latter categories have been hegemonically subsumed into one empirical orientation, producing knowledge born from normative modes of inquiry.

Accompanying deformation of knowledge systems is deformation of identity, or what Lather (1991) describes as "false consciousness" defined as "the denial of how our common sense ways of looking at the world are permeated with meanings that sustain our disempowerment" (p. 59). Similarly, critical theorist Paulo Freire (1983) refers to such myopic tendencies serving to reproduce the status quo as "existential duality," meaning the oppressed who are at the same time themselves also come to internalize and emulate the image of the oppressor (p. 47).

In relationship to the research inquiry, false consciousness manifests itself in a neocolonial social amnesia rooted in an ideology of capital accumulation and assimilation, which gained considerable momentum in the post war period. With this in mind, the rhetoric of education, training and employment within the current context may

eclipse deliberation over long-term goals concerning community sustainability. Understandably, resistance from various stakeholders whose conception of education fails to give attention or credence to the social forces that have shaped the present context, must therefore be taken into consideration.

Mitigating the inertia of false consciousness requires a dialogical enterprise between researcher and participant, through what Lather (1991) describes as "reciprocal reflexivity." Reciprocal reflexivity implies an action-oriented research outcome. Thus, a *critical* interpretive paradigm does not merely attempt to gather passive, subjective understandings from participants, but rather encompasses subjectivity and objectivity in dialectical fashion (Carson, 1992). Hence, ownership of the research process on the part of researcher and stakeholders alike builds reflexivity, only when findings are problematized and outcomes generated collaboratively.

Critical theory with its emphasis on action, praxis and the historical situatedness of findings (Denzin, 1998, p. 277) provides a useful framework to better understand socioeconomic and political forces currently impacting program development for adult learners in the North. By examining historical antecedents that have lead to the present context, perceptions expressed by participants can be problematized in a manner that draws out tensions from findings. Broadly categorized as themes, tensions emerging from interview data provide an effective means to increase reflexivity. From this vantage point, research as praxis develops - all the while negotiated within sociopolitical and cultural contexts in which actors operate within.

As a caveat, critical theory has been criticized for being too theory driven, top-down and preoccupied with theory verification (Denzin, 1998). Furthermore, an emphasis

on emancipation runs the risk of "imposing meanings on situations rather than constructing meaning through negotiation with participants" (Lather, 1991, p. 59). This tendency to approach research in a preconceived, theory-driven manner can translate into paternalism on the part of the researcher, and disillusionment on the part of participants. Less lofty and more realistic aspirations of developing on-going relationships through reciprocal reflexivity help to avoid these methodological pitfalls.

An emphasis on theory verification also implies that outcomes may be sufficiently jaundiced and rendered inaccurate through researcher bias. A multiplicity of meaning presented by a diverse array of stakeholders helps to offset a biased account of the research findings. On-going dialogue with participants and other stakeholders also helps to verify and triangulate data. At the same time, the study recognizes that an orientation grounded in Critical Theory provides opportunity for adequate generalizations to be made.

Qualitative Methods

The qualitative methods in this research inquiry include a literature review, interviews and informal discussions with people involved with northern development and adult education. Primary sources of information included interviews, informal visits and discussions. Government documents, newspaper articles and brochures also comprised primary sources of information. Secondary sources included journal articles and related texts which primarily incorporated a post-developmental critique of economic globalization in relation to adult education. Once a general understanding of theoretical considerations was covered, a review of literature pertaining to northern adult education occurred. This review enabled the research to be grounded within a northern historical

and socio-political context. During this phase of the literature review it became apparent current research pertaining to northern adult education policy in relation to mega-projects did not exist, thus providing an opportunity to narrow the inquiry and formulate a research question. Sources included: books, government documents, newspaper articles and education reports. These documents were collected from libraries, the internet and were also provided by personnel and respondents at Aurora College. Finally, a re-examination of primary and secondary sources was simultaneously undertaken once primary data had been analyzed. At this time, further refinements to the research question and intended outcomes were made. A log of these research activities is provided in Appendix A.

An exhaustive study of adult education in the NWT attempting to interview *all* stakeholders of northern adult education is impractical and problematic; impractical, because of financial and logistical constraints, and problematic because more data does not necessarily imply a greater approximation of reality. Instead, an interpretive paradigm draws upon the expertise of a select number of participants through the engagement of on-going dialogue. Perceptions shared by participants provide real time situational knowledge that is generated by those presently immersed in the work of policy implementation and program development. This corpus of knowledge then synergistically interacts with theory until researcher and participant alike reach a common understanding.

Primary data were collected through semi-structured interviews and informal discussions held with respondents and other key informants. Interviews and informal visits occurred over a prolonged period of time. Formal interviews occurred during the

first two weeks of July 2005; informal visits to Fort Smith occurred in March and July 2006. These visits provided a means of grounding information gathered within the context in which it was shared. Regular correspondence also occurred during the course of the study, providing yet another means of triangulating findings.

Applications to licensing bodies and granting agencies were made so the fieldwork component of the research could occur. Application to the University of Alberta Ethics Review Board occurred in April 2005 and was granted to February 28, 2007. A northern research license application was made to The Aurora Research Institute (Inuvik) in April, 2005 and subsequently granted in June of that year. Funding for the project came from the Canadian Circumpolar Institute (CCI) through a Northern Scientific Training Program Grant (NSTP). The total amount granted was $2800, which covered the cost of travel and accommodation costs during the fieldwork component.

Once ethics approval was granted, formal contact was made with the president of the college in May 2005 to introduce the study and seek permission to interview college personnel. Contact was also made with the Vice President of Policies and Programs at the head office in Fort Smith to help identify possible research participants. Selection was based on individuals who worked in the field of policy and program planning at the three regional campuses and the head office. The rationale for selecting participants from different campuses and head office ensured a broad cross section of perceptions could be gathered.

Conditions of anonymity were taken into consideration during this phase of the study. Maintaining confidentiality while working within a sparsely populated and politically diverse region presents challenges, as information shared can be easily traced

back to individual respondents. To maintain a degree of anonymity and autonomy, no further coordination with the Vice President of Policies and Programs was made once a list of potential candidates was provided.

Candidates were personally contacted in late April and invited to participate as interview subjects during the first two weeks of July. Interview dates and times were arranged with those candidates who agreed to participate. Two candidates declined the request to participate in the project, as they were out of town during the proposed interview schedule.

While the focus of the research inquiry is to gain understanding into how policy is created and implemented at the college, outside informants were included to provide additional perspectives and insights on adult education. In doing so, provision for the politicized process of priority setting is made by the inclusion of a multiplicity of "stakeholders," whose vested interests are represented as either individuals or groups (Greene, J, 1998).

Stakeholders included: representatives from industry, government (college personnel), aboriginal groups and academia. Given the diverse array of stakeholders, interview questions were designed to draw out tensions and incongruities between competing interests. In doing so, critical deliberation of the research question occurred.

Using recommendations from personal contacts, non-college participants were selected and contacted using similar protocols. A total of 8 interviews (4 men; 4 women) were conducted. College personnel (n=5) included 3 male and 2 female respondents, while non-college respondents (n=3) included 2 female and 1 male respondent.

College interviews occurred at both the Inuvik and Yellowknife regional campuses and the head office in Fort Smith. Interviews were held in respondents' offices and lasted no longer than one hour. One college interview was also conducted in September by telephone. Non-college interviews occurred in Yellowknife and were held in offices or a coffee shop.

Interview formats varied between college and non-college interviews. College interviews were semi-structured, involving a total of 8 open-ended questions. This format was chosen as a means of maximizing input from respondents, while at the same time, maintaining a level of uniformity so that cross comparison with other college personnel during the analysis stage of the investigation could occur. Unlike the college interviews, a set of pre-established questions was not used for the other respondents. Instead, an unstructured interview format was employed as it better suited the diversity of respondents' expertise and interests.

Prior to being interviewed, all respondents received a letter of informed consent, which explained the nature of the inquiry, conditions of anonymity and policies involving data use and management (Appendix B). Upon completion of the interview, respondents signed the letter and received a $20.00 gift certificate as a thank you for participating. Interview transcripts were sent to respondents in September, 2005 for confirmation of accuracy and content; no changes were made to transcripts by respondents.

College interviews commenced with an initial question regarding position held and duration of employment, followed by a question on college mandate. These initial questions were designed to ease respondents into the body of the inquiry, which involved ascertaining perceptions on program development in relation to community involvement,

funding arrangements and course offerings. Interviews closed with an opportunity for respondents to comment on anything else they felt should have been covered. Areas that respondents felt required further elaboration also occurred during this time. A list of interview questions given is provided in Appendix C.

Data Collection and Management

Interviews were audio taped to ensure data was captured in its entirety. This technique enabled conversation and ideas to flow naturally with minimal disturbance. A total of 20 pages of single-spaced 10-point font data were collected from these interviews. In keeping with the University of Alberta Standards for the Protection of Human Participants, transcript data are kept confidential and released subject to the consent of participants. Any data collected are used solely for the research outlined and is kept for a minimum of five years before being destroyed.

It should be noted here, that anonymity of one respondent was compromised during a series of crosschecking involving another respondent. While the intention to cross reference information shared was for purposes of validating findings, the end result caused consternation on the part of the respondent whose anonymity was compromised. This event served as an important lesson in researcher-respondent relations and a reminder to ensure conditions of anonymity respecting participants' wishes are upheld throughout the research inquiry.

Data Analysis

Data analysis ultimately aims to describe and explain a pattern of relationships as interpreted within a conceptual framework (Huberman & Miles, 1998). Interplay between theory and primary data drives analysis, where one body of knowledge informs the other

in a synergistic fashion. Key policy texts and educational documents from government sources (GNWT), newspaper articles and data collected from interviews and informal visits and discussions formed the main body of analysis.

As Lather (1991) explains, "Data must be allowed to generate propositions in a dialectical manner that permits use of a priori theoretical frameworks, but which keeps a particular framework from becoming the container into which the data must be poured" (p. 62). An iterative inductive analysis described by Huberman and Miles (1998) provides an effective means to support Lather's claim. In this model, a series of question and answer cycles drives data analysis, resulting in subsequent refinement and modification of understanding as new constructs emerge and findings are validated. Concomitantly, abstract generalizations form from empirical data gathered (p. 187).

Three sub processes are involved in iterative inductive analysis: data reduction, data display and verification (Huberman & Miles, 1998). Data reduction begins with a theoretical orientation that shapes and determines questions asked. As Greene (1998) explains, "...what importantly distinguishes one evaluation methodology from another is not methods, but rather whose questions are addressed and which values are promoted" (p. 378). A critical theoretical framework implies questions illuminate historical, structural and value bases (p. 378) as a means of providing space for critical reflection and praxis through reciprocal reflexivity. Part and parcel of this process involves making value judgments regarding which data to include, subsume and incorporate into findings. Consequently, data are automatically *reduced* in the sense that responses related to a critical theoretical orientation are elicited.

Essential components of interviews were extracted only once transcripts had been read several times. A visual display of interview data involved recording key ideas on large pieces of paper. This process enabled a comparison of similarities and differences between the various interviews. During this process common themes formed – each of which contains tensions generated from comparisons made. These themes and tensions provide a useful means to effectively address the research question.

During this process college personnel were contacted to help make sense of findings. Of particular note, was the generous assistance of both the college accountant and president in explaining various aspects of program funding. This information was used as a means of triangulating responses shared by several informants. Other assistance from respondents also occurred at this time. Correspondence by email was used to address questions that arose during this phase of the research.

Validity and Reliability

A variety of strategies were used to increase validity and reliability within the study. Sampling a variety of respondents representing a diverse array of interests helped reduce bias. Diversity occurred both between groupings (college and non-college respondents) and within groupings. In the case of the college, interviews were conducted with policy and program planners located in three communities (Inuvik, Yellowknife & Fort Smith). Perspectives came from employees who occupy different positions at two campuses and head office. Such diversity in college respondents provides opportunities to gain a broad cross section of interests in a relatively short period of time. Non-college respondents were equally diverse, representing perspectives from academia, an aboriginal group and industry. Findings from secondary sources occurred simultaneously with

interview analysis, providing a means of cross-checking interview data with statistics and policy documents.

As a means of establishing validity, findings were checked through correspondence with informants and respondents during the course of the inquiry. Triangulation involved various stages of cross checking for understanding and accuracy. Initially, transcripts were sent to respondents as a means of checking for accuracy of content. Later, correspondence with college personnel was required to clarify information provided. A draft of the thesis was sent to college respondents as a final means of soliciting feedback and verifying findings. A presentation to the college at a mutually agreeable time would also provide a valuable opportunity for personnel to engage with the research.

Strategies to avoid contaminating data by researcher bias were also employed during interviews. An open-ended interview format provided opportunity for respondents to freely voice their opinions on a wide variety of issues concerning the college. During this time, prompting was kept to a minimum. Any prompting was designed to clarify responses rather than steer the interview in a certain pre-conceived direction.

Reciprocity

According to Lather (1991), "Researchers are not so much owners of data as they are 'majority shareholders' who must justify decisions and give participants a public forum for critique"(p. 58). Lather goes on to state, "... debriefing sessions provide an opportunity to invite participants' critical reaction to our accounts of their worlds" (p. 64).

Northern research protocols (Association of Canadian Universities for Northern Studies, 2003; Aurora Research Institute, 2005) encourage reciprocal partnerships between northerners and researchers. According to the Aurora Research Institute Researcher's Guide (2005, p. 10), reciprocity of findings can include community presentations. As a condition of the Aurora Research Institute's license, a summary of findings was sent in June, 2006. Copies of the thesis will also be sent to the Aurora College library and Aurora Research Institute upon its completion.

Limitations

Conducting an empirical investigation in the North is challenging insofar as distances between researcher and participants make on-going communication problematic. This reality can hamper aspects of the study - most notably: triangulation, verification and validation. These components of trustworthiness help build reciprocal reflexivity and serve to further engage participants and researcher alike in meaningful dialogue.

Limitations to the study also included:

1. A focus on the perceptions of policy planners rather than those impacted by such policy.
2. Constraints caused by limited time-frame for interviews and on-going access to respondents. Further visitations and follow-up interviews would have enabled on-going dialogue to occur.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Chapter Introduction

Two general categories relating to the central research question have been identified from an analysis of interview transcripts:

1. Community Relations: Meeting high expectations of various stakeholders within a shifting socio-political dynamic.
2. Marketization of Adult Education: Politics, Priorities and Partnerships

These categories serve as central nuclei for key issues shared by respondents to be clustered. In the first category, multiple perspectives involving community relations and adult education are shared. Here, particular attention is paid to relationships that have formed between communities and Aurora College, and the manner in which the college has responded to pressures of providing programming within the present socio-political and economic context. The second category examines the manner in which partnerships directly impact funding, and the kinds of programming. Funding and program development related to land claims and self-governance agreements is discussed here.

Where possible, insights shared by respondents have been left in their entirety, providing "rich texts" allowing the reader to gain a firsthand, unedited impression. Where possible, particulars relating to places or events have been omitted so a general thematic understanding of socio-political forces shaping adult education policy can be arrived at. In doing so, confidentiality of places, names and events is also respected.

While some responses tend to show a high degree of congruency, certain topics prompted differences in opinion, values and priorities. These differences occurred both

between college personnel and also between college and non-college respondents. With regard to the former subset, community relations and the perceived role that the college plays in facilitating program development contrasted considerably between campuses where respondents were interviewed. Perceptions shared by non-college respondents provide a broader context to draw from as they are not bound by any one particular ideology or mandate. As such, they provide a useful foil to college responses by highlighting differences of opinion in key areas discussed during interviews.

Analysis of findings draws on tensions embedded in the subtext of data gathered. These tensions are deliberated on using theoretical considerations covered in the literature review along with an analysis of employment and funding statistics provided by the college and GNWT sources. In doing so, I pose questions, which along with recommendations, serve as a focal point for the concluding chapter.

FINDINGS

College Mandate and Course Offerings

According to the corporate plan, *Learning and Success in the 21st Century*, Aurora College has a mandate to "support the changing governance structure of the territory through the development of Northern leadership, enhance economic development through the education of a skilled workforce, and to contribute towards lifelong learning for Northerners and Northern communities" (Government of the Northwest Territories, n.d., b, p. 5).

Similarly, college respondents cited labour market training as the mandate's main objective, while developing northern leadership was not specifically mentioned. For

instance, one respondent stated the college mandate is to create better lives for northerners.

> *That means doing whatever communities require to give students/graduates the tools to choose employment of their liking, and to be able to support their families and be able to afford the choices that they'd like to give them a good quality of life.*

Another respondent matter-of-factly asserted: *We train people for jobs and that's always been the case – we started out as a vocational centre and we still have a large arm of the college that trains for industry.*

Maintaining positive working relationships between regional campuses and the communities they serve is also cited as a high priority. The terms *responsive* and *partnerships* were often used by respondents to describe this rapport. The college responds to the needs of communities by collaboratively generating and funding new initiatives through the formation of partnerships with various groups and agencies.

Offering a diversity of programs is also part of the college mandate. A perusal of the college calendar, *Program Delivery Fall & Winter 2005-2006*, indicates a breadth of program and course offerings (Aurora College, 2005). However, diversity exists in regional centers only, while learning centers in smaller communities are limited to offering Adult Basic Education (ABE), literacy and some trades-related courses typically running for several weeks.

Central campuses also offer these same programs, along with degree programs in social work, nursing and teaching – all of which are completed in partnership with southern universities. Programs vary in length from several days (e.g. Environmental Monitoring) to several months (e.g. English Workplace Literacy). Degree or diploma courses require several years of study, including course completion at southern

universities. For example, the Bachelor of Education program is taught at Thebacha Campus in Fort Smith for the first two years, with the remainder completed at the University of Saskatchewan.

Program development is hampered by tight fiscal constraints and uncertain funding. Low educational levels have caused resources to be redirected towards upgrading rather than postsecondary programs. Given these constraints and realities, resources are spread thin. As one respondent stated, the college *tries to be responsive and perhaps too responsive in the sense that it goes in all directions at once*. This frustration was summed up by another respondent:

> *I think it is a challenge for the college to work in an environment that is so huge – having 3 campuses, 23 learning centres. How do you keep one standard up? And how do you deliver every program under the sun that every person wants when you have a limited amount of funding? You have to be all things to all people and it's a hard role to fill.*

Being responsive to community interests has also come to mean developing training initiatives with mega-projects. A perceived benefit of these initiatives is providing employment in smaller communities. However, developing these programs involves its own set of challenges, as the college must try and be *proactive* with an industry that is *reactive* to market vagaries. As one college respondent explained,

> *...in the oil and gas industry you never know what these companies are doing and when they are doing this...they're waiting on this issue to be dealt with and this issue to be dealt with and suddenly 'OK we're going', and they need this amount of workers in this area and that require some level of training, so in that case a reactive kind of thing and that is something that we can't help...I personally think they could provide us with more direction.*

Community Relations

Perceptions regarding working relationships between campuses and outlying communities varied considerably. Respondents at one campus intimated a strong sense of unity with the communities it serves:

> *From my point of view, the campus servicing those [aboriginal] communities - excellent relationship. A large portion of our program funding comes from these [aboriginal] groups... excellent relationship in terms of planning and determining what programs we want in the region and in a lot of cases it is shared between the groups. I have it easy here because of the working relationship with our core funding partners.*

In contrast, a respondent at a different campus stated:

> *They're saying, "I'm not really sure the college is satisfying our needs - we're going to work around you and partner with someone else." We are trying to respond to those, but past reputation may nullify the ability to do that; they're going to institutions in the South that may have success with aboriginal people like U of Vic., U of Calgary, U of A; partnering with them to bring stuff up... They have all this federal millions of dollars transferred to them, and their administrative structure is changing ... They are trying to find programs that meet the needs of their community and we are trying to work with them, and sometimes some of those people, if they see the college not meeting their needs, they try and go around the college by doing other things.*

A non-college respondent added:

> *The reason why they don't see the college meeting their needs is partly location – people having to be away from their communities; partly they feel pissed that the mines... says whenever it comes to employing aboriginal people you've got to have this training and this training whereas they wouldn't say the same thing for a guy from Newfie land or Alberta, they'd employ them solely on their job skills they have - demonstrable. With aboriginal people, all of a sudden they are starting to add layers of requirements that are all college-based. And I think they also see a range of people becoming professional course takers and not getting into the jobs....*

While not directly attributable to the college per se, the above passage exemplifies the distrust smaller aboriginal communities have of centralized state bureaucratic apparatuses. Consequently, colonial "past reputation," is manifested in a need by some

communities to create their own programs, while other regions prefer to work directly with the college as the main vehicle of program delivery. This dichotomy indicates issues relating to decentralization of education are not uniformly interpreted or experienced across the territory.

Managing Student Success

A college priority is to improve upon student success through increased enrolment, retention and graduation from its programs (Government of the Northwest Territories, n.d. b). Not surprisingly, these priorities have become highly politicized in light of pressures to hire northern aboriginals in response to agreements signed between industry and aboriginal groups. However, in order to prepare northerners for post-secondary programs, resources must be spent on upgrading skills, despite the immediate need for skilled labour.

A frustration cited by college respondents involves high expectations by stakeholders for the college to offer both upgrading *and* postsecondary programming. Considering the college spends 30% of its programming budget (Government of the Northwest Territories, n.d. b) on Adult Basic Education (ABE) - it is not surprising its dual role as both an upgrading centre and a certificate, diploma and degree granting institution, creates tensions that are experienced at both a philosophical and fiscal level. According to one college respondent:

> *Sometimes people in the communities have had only the first few grades of schooling because of the residential school problems and people had to leave the community, it was very difficult. And so people would leave and go back home; a couple of generations that have missed getting real literacy. And so there's a real struggle out there and we are struggling to figure out how to satisfy that.*

One college employee informally shared a theory as to the cause of low education levels in communities, explaining that the GNWT - in its zeal to remove northern residential schools and decentralize the school system - never filled the vacuum by adequately funding local schools. The end result: Education was *brought to the people* but at a cost of being under-funded, resulting in even lower levels of formal education than had existed under the residential school system when resources were centralized (personal communication, March 20, 2006). Another respondent stated: *The government has tried to address high school education in the communities by making access to ABE [Adult Basic Education]...you just wonder what that is all about because one teacher can't teach all subject areas - so very limited...we have large expectations.*

Consequently, there is a perception that government policy at the primary and secondary level has undermined efforts by those charged with the responsibility of implementing policy at the post-secondary level. These insights indicate centralized government policy, which has been historically resisted as a colonially imposed measure, is cited by policy planners themselves as undermining their efforts.

In an effort to respond to low education levels and increase enrolment in its postsecondary programs, the college has created *access programs*. These preparatory programs introduce students to a particular area of interest while simultaneously providing upgrading so they can enter a field of their choice. As one respondent explained:

> *We always try to increase our enrolment, but there is the challenge in the communities of people being ready to go into various levels of programming, even the lower levels of programming and there's only so many people, so what we have done is put into place access programs that deal mainly with upgrading and have a little bit of this type of programming that they'd have when they enter their program.*

These programs are supported by financial assistance, which recognizes cultural particularities associated with education and lifestyles:

> *Students can get student financial assistance by taking an access program and that's hugely important because the majority of our students have kids, because children are very important to northerners - particularly aboriginal northerners. And many times they have children quite young, and many are single parents as well. And so having the resources to go back to school is hugely important...*

Despite measures to encourage student success, one respondent lamented that graduation rates remain low:

> *80% of our students are aboriginal; 20% of our graduates are aboriginal. They fall in the cracks somewhere. They do not gain success; they do not finish programs. We are failing them somewhere, which is an incredible statistic...Why aren't people finishing programs? And a lot of our students whether aboriginal or not have families when they come here, but a lot of non-aboriginal people are younger when they start. The choice for a lot of aboriginal women is they get pregnant and have their children first and then they decide to come back to school. And then they have these huge responsibilities and it is a lot harder for them to get through.*

Various factors, including: cultural dislocation, homesickness, and pressures faced by students returning to home communities were cited as contributing towards low graduation rates. As one college respondent explained, it is like dealing with another culture:

> *When we had a cooking program running... it went for eight weeks, a group of five or six students, it went very well: nobody got less than 97% - they all got jobs lined up. One lady in her 40's committed suicide the week after graduation. Like why? And we went out to the funeral for this student and we were the only white folks ... everybody knew everybody else, we were the outsiders. And it just struck me that if someone is coming from that kind of community ... it must seem like this huge foreign place with these foreign faces: people they don't know; ideas that they don't know; they don't know where to go or who to talk to. It must be incredibly scary, and that is what I learnt from going to that community...this sense of belonging.*

These profound insights into culture shock experienced by aboriginal students from smaller communities also create conditions that may preclude a return to home communities. As the same respondent explained:

> *When you take people from a small community and train them in something and get them expertise - we found in TEP [Teacher Education Program] students and social work students - they did not want to go back to their communities right away because they needed to gain confidence in somebody else's space before they had to go and take their sister's children away. You know what I mean? These are huge responsibilities and to face that must be really horrific.*

A different reason for students not wanting to return to their home communities after attending a regional campus was informally shared by another college official: Once they experience a much higher standard of living and greater opportunities in regional centers, they don't want to return "home" (personal communication, March 20, 2006). Often, going off to college is the first time students have left their communities for extended periods. Ironically, as the workforce becomes more educated and mobile the college may inadvertently be contributing towards the current demographic shift away from smaller communities towards larger centers.

Apart from providing assistance to students, programs have also been put in place to teach "life skills" to prepare aboriginal students for the workforce. By aiding students in areas of life management, retention of employees in the workforce will increase. At the same time, employers will stand a greater chance of reaching quotas set for northern aboriginal hires. As one college respondent explained:

> *We help people with their life skills and things like that. If people get a job in mining and make 60-80,000 dollars and then go back to their communities...what would these peripheral life skill programs be? We just put in a new course ...Banking...those are the life skills we do in Mine Training...people need to be aware that this isn't the government...there's no second chance. A whole new environment - and if you don't do what they want, they [diamond mines] have the*

option to let you go immediately; so to get people to understand that...banking, nutrition...you can only go so far for helping people to make those healthy choices.

Similarly, a localized approach to life skills training in one community was described by a non-college respondent this way:

A program that blankets for everyone is not going to meet aboriginal needs at this point in these communities for mining training...the college will be involved and sit on an advisory board, but they'll deliver all the courses themselves at the school level and the school already does include a lot of adult learners...

Recruitment

The degree to which mega-projects have impacted enrolment in adult education was discussed by respondents. Respondents at one campus cited mega-projects as being a "catalyst" in generating interest to return to school. As one respondent stated: *I've seen people in that [Natural Resources Technology] program that maybe five years ago I wouldn't have seen...I think that a lot of this has to do with the potential they're seeing in industry.* Another respondent added:

For me one of the best things about this potential [Mackenzie Valley] pipeline is that it's ramping up the interest, the energy, the hope for northerners to be truly a meaningful part of the future. In the communities the hopelessness and social issues are the biggest things to deal with. In my view, let's go full bore ahead because it's going to take us five years to have a journey person out there; let's start today. Industry is a catalyst. At the end there will be something. It may not be exactly what is painted in that proposal, but they will have something at the end of the day that they didn't have today: They'll have those safety tickets, so people can go wherever they want in Canada. How many people are away from this community in the trades area - I'd say 85 to 90%. Why is that?

Conversely, a respondent at a different campus stated: *The challenge is that there's a lot of employment in the North and so they take jobs rather than get their education - so that's our on-going challenge.* A different respondent added: *We have the*

money [ASEP funding], but ironically most of them are working...those that aren't have issues that impede them. A non-college respondent supported these claims by stating:

> *Everybody that can be employed or easily trained is already out there on the ground and the next group of people that can get into mines actually require extra effort because they have learning barriers - so they may be FAS [Fetal Alcohol Syndrome] kids, or a people that are chronically unemployed, specific learning challenges and needs...*

Finally, notions that the labour market is currently saturated with northern workers were countered by an industry representative, who stated:

> *There is a large untapped resource of aboriginal people in the NWT. The problem is that many are under-qualified for the jobs in the increasingly high tech mining industry. The GNWT is responsible for education here. Perhaps it is time they were asked what their strategy is to significantly increase the number of high school graduates. GNWT should be asked about its strategy to increase support for trades training. NWT Mining and Petroleum are booming but programs need to be in place now to ensure Northerners can take advantage. Hiring targets alone won't do it. Industry needs the raw material - Grade 12 grads at minimum.*

At first glance, the above comments may seem to contradict college perceptions shared at one campus. However, if we recall responses made by college respondents with respect to government policy and school completion rates, this last passage illustrates discontent about the GNWT educational policy is also felt in the private sector as well. Consequently, there is widespread endorsement for "stay in school" initiatives so pressures faced by both industry and Aurora College are alleviated.

Program Development and Priority Setting

College programs are brokered with communities in a two-step manner. Initially contact is established through the Community Adult Educator, who acts as both instructor and liaison between communities and campuses. Once needs are identified, programs are then developed through the establishment of committees representing a consortium of

interests. This second phase is contingent upon funding and supply of qualified students. According to one respondent:

> *Adult educators are amazing people. They're expected to be out and about - our eyes and ears; the person in the community who's responsible for making decisions about training: having discussions with them; meeting with the school; the principal...And so what typically happens if there's need in the community, the adult educator will get wind of it and have the discussion in the community with some folks about what perhaps the college could offer. That adult educator would also talk to their manager who's the chair of community programs here and the discussion then would be...being attentive in the community, showing the willingness to assist. People aren't obligated to use it, but if you'd like us to we'd like to do this for you. We've learned to negotiate -beg, borrow, steal- whatever we have to bring whatever they need here: northernize it; keep that important corporate memory in the North. So I really encourage rather than phoning the South...bring it here; something left behind, we have something that stays here with us to use at another time. Whereas, if people fly in/fly out you don't really maximize the potential benefits.*

Depending on the stakeholders involved and funding regimes in place, two different paths are taken with respect to program development: traditionally through government departments who "fine tune" on-going programs; and secondly through partnerships with industry. While both approaches involve aboriginal groups, the latter category is in response to vocational training geared towards non-renewable resource extraction industries. One respondent explained the approach this way:

> *Program development: some things have stayed the same. There's a needs assessment done; a department comes to us, they want a program delivered. We also broker programs.... It's definitely changed with oil/gas and diamond mining there's no question. We need to be responsive to industry and potential clients and to government to get programs up and running quickly. So we'll develop like mining processing, so we'll work with companies...to put a program together called mining processing and that's something we deliver here; so it's very specific to the industry. So a lot of our programming is that; regular programming is updating and refocusing. We're looking at refocusing with our partners in criminal justice programming – originally it was designed to look after the women's facility up in Inuvik and designed specifically for women to enter that profession. Now it's changed too – the Department of Justice wants it changed for graduates to get jobs in a wider range of professions, and so we're doing that.*

The degree to which recent mega-projects have impacted college programming was shared by one respondent:

> *We haven't pared down as such – we're still running the same fundamental programs: TEP [Teacher Education Program], Social Work, Rec. Leaders. Most of those programs are still staying and most will get revised from time to time...If we don't get the students we will cancel a first year, we have done that: we're not running the Social program or NRTP [Natural Resources Technology Program] – so we do look at the number of applicants and will not run the program if we don't get enough...We don't tend to cut programs unless we aren't getting students in it and re-profile the money elsewhere; we try and come up with additional funds...*

Another college respondent described the situation this way:

> *We haven't really shifted our emphasis, but we've expanded our programs in response to industrial development. We don't do all the training but a lot of it...more training as a result of the funding...shifted the focus to industrial third party funded...not college-based funds....*

Interviewer: *So, In other words the college is like a business... people may want to be nurses, teachers, social workers and so forth, but the reality is the money has to come from somewhere and the college can kick in so much, so the funding is really redirecting the emphasis on industrial training. Would that be correct*? Respondent: *Yes, that's correct.*

Partnerships

The college has sought partnerships with outside agencies to help facilitate delivery and cost sharing. These initiatives are seen as responsible, proactive measures required to ensure northerners reap full benefits of development that is tied directly to employment – most of which has been traditionally supplanted by southern migrant workers. As one respondent explained:

> *Our program development is also focused on being very responsive to the needs of communities and the needs of industry – to get people geared up and educated*

for the right skills to enter the labour force. In regards to mining and oil and gas development – we have expanded our program greatly to do this by having more partners: we have partners with NAIT; partners with the universities down South more so we can deliver great programs in time for our potential students.

According to this same respondent, stakeholders include,

...anyone who wants to see a program done. In the case of Inuvik, the Gwich'in and Inuvialuit. They've been stakeholders in many of our programs and one of the main ones has been the Renewable Resources program up there where they funded their students to attend this course for the last 6 years I think and been very successful and been very relevant to the Beaufort region. Justice I mentioned is a partner with delivering the criminal justice program; Department of ECE [Education, Culture and Employment] is certainly involved with the TEP [Teacher Education Program] – that's their baby that they put all their effort and money into that program; the mine- Mine Processing as mentioned. We have aboriginal groups and mining people: the Mine Training Society and ourselves trying to develop programs for people that are already in the workplace, whether they be upgrading so you get new jobs or just to get them into the workplace. So it depends on what area – we have many partners to do many various programming.

Partnerships have also been made to train northerners in areas related to self governance and land claims:

It's not only industry that is impacting [programming] but the settlement of land claims is impacting too. So we are looking at having a partnership between the school with MACA [Terriorial Department of Municipal and Community Affairs] and the Gwichin tribal council to look at developing a program in governance ...governance is a big area and environmental monitoring ....

Support for programs comes from various stakeholders, which include government departments, industry and aboriginal groups. Mainstay programs which have been in existence for a number of years are less intensive in terms of consultation with various stakeholders. These programs require "fine-tuning" on a periodic basis and include Social Work, Teachers Education Program, Northern Resources Technology Program, Nursing, Recreation Leadership and Criminal Justice. Government departments are the primary stakeholders for these programs. For example, the

Department of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE) is primarily involved with the Teacher Education Program, while the Department of Justice provides input and direction for program planning related to the Criminal Justice program.

On the other hand, funding for vocational training programs is more complex as a diverse array of stakeholders (industry, aboriginal groups and government) in both the private and public sector are involved. The Mine Training Society and Pipeline Training Committee are examples of such partnerships. In both cases the college has a representative sitting on these committees, which meet regularly to discuss labor market needs and the necessary training the college can fulfill to support the goals of the committee. As one respondent explains,

> *Imperial Oil ... Shell, Conoco, Exxon and PG – they're involved with the Pipeline Training Committee and their main focus is to train people to get jobs that will come available for initial construction of the facilities that are going to be built. I know they do some work with aboriginal groups directly. For example, one of the groups is working – Imperial – with the Sahtu to get some of their people out to get them trained – driver training, rig training – so they're doing a lot of that.*

Learner Needs as Contested Sites

Being responsive to communities through the formation of partnerships with industry raises the thorny question of *who* represents community interests, and how such representation translates into *learner needs* and program choice. As one non-college respondent explained, mega-projects have created a divide between the interests of leaders and its people:

> *There are so many people in the communities that are against the [Mackenzie] gas project but they do not want to speak out against it because of the repercussions they would get from their aboriginal leadership, because standing up against the pipeline would mean they would not be getting jobs from the band office; they'd be black-balled essentially and discredited...some leadership want to hear from the people – we are not tarring them all with the same brush; people*

need to know that it is alright to ask their leadership about the project. For the leadership, they see their people without any jobs – they see the young people hanging out at the band office waiting for a job to come through and they want to help those people legitimately – and so they see the pipeline as the only opportunity – but there has to be an informed decision: These are the problems we are having with the project and they need to be addressed.

Similar concerns have also been raised during environmental panel hearings for the proposed Mackenzie Gas Project. According to one report, "Discord exposed within the Gwich'in nation" (King, 2006), a divide exists between elders and youth who are against the project, and aboriginal leaders who endorse it. One elder's concern related to youth being unable to gain meaningful employment: "Nobody's got education…so how will you train people in two years?" In response, industry proponents cited its working relationship with the college to identify potential workers. Another elder opposed the project, stating it will "worsen the social, cultural, physical and spiritual well-being of our communities" (A13). Still other elders in the region feel such mega-projects have eclipsed and hence silenced alternatives encouraging cottage-based enterprises focused on renewable resources – a move that could diversify the economy and foster self-sufficiency (Loreen, 2005).

Such "divide and conquer" discord has implications for policy aimed at adult education and training. As the following non-college respondent explains, limited options for adult learners in small communities may be linked to the current economic boom:

A lot of times these young people are not interested in these types of jobs – there's only a certain number and types of jobs available, and only for mainly men, and a lot of people are not interested in these physical labour jobs ... and there's no other stream being offered to them....The construction jobs being offered are not the end-all for people that they want to accept. I feel a lot of them want to get out of the communities and get post-secondary education and that's not really being encouraged right now because the labour force that is needed is young, skilled

trades. You look at the political situation: We need young aboriginal people to develop leadership. In my own family and a lot of other Dene families education is really stressed so that our culture would survive and we'd maintain our traditions – but right now a lot of the families and young people are encouraged to go and get their training and make money – fast money. Some of them will be able to take advantage of this short-term work and save the money to go onto school. But the question is how many people will do that and how many will get stuck or pulled into the working lifestyle rather than going onto post secondary education... We're hearing from a lot of young people that they want more options to be generated and more long term thinking.

Funding

According to the government document, *Arctic College Headquarters: Study and Recommendations on Decentralization* (Government of the Northwest Territories, 1989) the college became a corporate entity in 1986 allowing it to:

> ...receive funds directly from the private sector to deliver training programs to address the needs of business in the Northwest Territories. As a business Arctic College, could and would have to market itself and compete with southern colleges and training institutes to provide programs to meet the needs of the Northwest Territories labour market. (p. 10)

Unlike the time at which the above document was written, the recent economic boom and changing socio-political dynamics have enabled the college to increase its focus on third party funding. A frustration cited by college respondents involves unstable procurement of funds which hampers long-term program development. Third-party funding varies from year to year with no guarantee it will continue, while base funding is part of each campus budget and is somewhat stable. The majority of third- party funding comes from government departments, and comprises approximately $5 million of the total program delivery budget ($38 million); about $29 million of the $38 million is base-funded and the remainder comes from tuition, rent and other revenues (personal communication with college respondent).

However, as one campus respondent testified, program funding varies from region to region:

> *We only have two and a half base-funded programs [for certificate and diploma programs], in other words programs that we know will continue from year to year - we have money for 2.5. The rest of what we offer - which is up to six full secondary type programming - is all funded by third-party: Inuvialuit, Gwichin, industry, Joint Secretariat.*

As one respondent explained: *[A] large portion of program funding comes from aboriginal groups [meaning that the college] must respond to their needs.* Another respondent stated: *We've structured a lot of short-term programming for individual short term community needs, but it depends on the dollars coming in and who's paying for it and whether there's development for it.*

Differences between the two funding pools impacts the nature in which programs are brokered:

> *We do a lot of hustling, a lot of consulting and then we prioritize. First of all we discuss with our partners what they'd like to see us put proposals in for, then each group takes those and gives us a list of what they'd like to submit, then they make their decisions, then we see if we can match that up so that everybody agrees to partner. I have a little bit of college money thanks to budget changes I negotiated, so that every year I have some money to come to the table with so that I say we'd like to run the practical nurses program: you kick in so much, you...and I kick in so much and we can do this. That's how we do a lot of our work. Then that's only the first major step. Then we have to market to see if there's a supply because the demands are great and the supply very limited of qualified applicants who will succeed in the program; and that's where the upgrading is very much needed. So that's how we prioritize. Any of the non-base-funded programs we run definitely has input from our stakeholders. And the base-funded programs we run - we look at them from year to year; tracking number of applicants. We did eliminate two programs: Licensed Practical Nurse Program and the TEP [Teacher Education Program] year one. It's an ebb and flow situation in a small market; did not seem to be the interest. We are a college who will not run a program for the sake of running a program. We have to make sure that the scarce resources available are applied in the areas with the most market demand and interest and the number of qualified folks.*

The majority of third-party funding for industrial programs comes from the Aboriginal Skills and Employment Program (ASEP) which is a federal grant controlled by the Aboriginal Futures Society (oil and gas training) and the Mine Training Society (mining). This training program grant is targeted to prepare aboriginal northerners for mega-projects like the Mackenzie Gas Project and diamond mines. As one college respondent explained, *In response to ASEP funding- that's where we get the ideas to decide what programs we're going to deliver...when and where....* Another college respondent described the situation this way:

> *Program development has grown in many different areas. The word holistic is over-used, but I like to see this campus have a little bit of everything and we are not always able to do that because many of our programs change from year to year depending on the funding and aboriginal groups – what their priorities are. The $12-$14 million ASEP program is certainly driving a huge piece of that – and that's good, but not everyone will or wants to work in the oil and gas industry and so that's why we strive to work with our partners in education here to look at a more balanced programs to offer: having some health related; having some social related because social impacts are a huge concern for everyone in terms of the pipeline...so definitely oil and gas is a program area that has increased a lot over the last few years, with the idea that there will be a pipeline starting anywhere from 2007-2008 upwards, so that's huge; but also people recognize there are huge demands for long-term northerners to take positions in health, not only the medical field but nursing, teachers, social workers - all those areas have great need. We're also looking at trying to make sure we preserve culture and language as best we can by offering the traditional arts program we are offering this fall; traditional skills and also a bit of business/math and English. There's still a lot of need for upgrading - my preference would not to be in the business of upgrading, that's why we support the stay in school idea but in most of our 12 communities we serve, most of our programming is upgrading related with shorter programs like the oil/gas safety....*

Ironically, ASEP funding is also cited as complicating matters for policy planners, owing to the parameters in which it is allocated. In light of pressure to hire aboriginal northerners, programs have become highly politicized to the point that ethnicity is the deciding factor when it comes to offering vocational based training related to mega

projects. As one respondent lamented: *We'd offer more for industrial training...but not enough people...there are those that are not aboriginal...ASEP funding precludes them...our funding is based on the number of aboriginals in the program. We have to break even...can't go in the hole...If we don't get enough aboriginals, we don't run it.*

Self Government

Self-governance is also impacting third-party funding through agreements signed between aboriginal groups and industry. Known as impact and benefit agreements (IBAs), compensation by companies for negative impacts caused by industrial development on traditional land includes employment and training, profit-sharing, and environmental regulation. Unlike, ASEP funds however, IBAs do not require disclosure of agreements signed which vary between groups, making it difficult to track funding tied to education and training.

How aboriginal groups use IBA funds is seen as crucial in determining community wellness. As one non-college respondent explained:

> *What makes a community do really well and another not as well: strong leadership and unity, a focus on land claims and an agreement like the Dogrib have means everybody is centralized; there's a unity, and deciders on new mineral development on their land... and I think the other thing is being really clear on where the funds are going. I know the Inuit are the best on reporting back to the corporations; they're really clear on how they spend every penny of their IBA money – and they don't have to do that; other communities don't...not part of their agreement that they should, but I know with the Dogrib you can track where their money goes and it's pretty clear it's going into culture and education, whereas with the other communities...their money's gone into risky economic [ventures]...and they've lost as a result. The Dogrib analyze the whole mining cycle and analyze where they put their money in economic diversification in fairly low risk areas...roads, maintenance, site services, a whole range of services that are fairly certain economic ventures, versus...putting their IBA funds into the most risky areas like diamond polishing – highest capital, highest potential for loss and now as a result all of their money goes into that pocket to try and get that company out of receivership.*

ANALYSIS

As the findings suggest, a simple cause and effect relationship between commodification of education and mega-project development is not readily apparent. This is because social forces contributing to the state of adult education in the North require consideration of multiple variables which must be culturally and historically situated. Endeavoring to understand social forces impacting adult education using a qualitative methodology is also challenging in the sense that respondents are immersed in the business of providing education within the existing paradigm; opportunities to critically reflect upon impacts caused by economic globalization on traditional cultures and adult education is not easily afforded.

Recurring themes contained within the two general categories in which findings are clustered include distrust of governmental educational policies and marketization of education. Both themes coalesce around the central research question which endeavors to ascertain impacts of mega-project development on adult education policy and programs. Ideas presented in the literature review are revisited in order to analyze and interpret these themes.

Since division of the territories into Nunavut and present-day NWT in 1999, on-going government bureaucratization - seen in an increase in civil servants - has sparked criticism. In the media, the GNWT is often characterized as being top-heavy, self-serving and disconnected from needs and interests of small communities (Hiring Machine, 2006; McCauley, September 26, 2005, October 17, 2005, & July 4, 2005; Stop the Hiring, 2005). Most of this activity has occurred in Yellowknife, the territory's most

affluent community, and a demographic anomaly considering it contains roughly half the population and is comprised mainly of non-aboriginals.

Frustration with the GNWT over poor high school retention and graduation rates was expressed by both the industry and college respondents. Both groups endorsed, stay-in - school strategies to increase high school retention rates as a priority for the GNWT. Interestingly, significant gains have been made in school completion rates, suggesting mounting pressures created by the new economy has resulted in the GNWT becoming a popular scapegoat, even by its own employees.

In light of low formal education levels, the college is forced to operate as both an upgrading center and postsecondary institution – a situation that has spread resources thinly and undermined efforts by adult educators. These pressures have been exacerbated by increased demand for a labour force which is politicized along ethnic lines as a result of agreements signed between aboriginal groups, industry and government. The college has responded to these pressures and high expectations by increasing student accommodation at regional campuses; seeking new and innovative ways of working with communities through school transition programs; and forging new partnerships.

Distrust of a centralized state bureaucratic apparatus by aboriginal groups, is reflected in self-governance initiatives, resulting in a shift in the balance of power. These changes have impacted relationships with the college. While some groups appear to welcome partnerships with the college, other groups have turned to alternative service providers to form programs.

Self-governance has also resulted in alliances and partnerships with industry. Given market vagaries and short-term economic gain wrought from such ventures, the following

question needs to be considered: Will new sociopolitical relationships necessarily translate into increased autonomy and community sustainability?

To answer this question, the second theme - marketization of adult education - needs to be considered. In light of mega-project development education has become increasingly tied to the market. For aboriginal groups this has meant signing agreements with industry and government, which involves trades training and preferential employment. For the college, third-party funding has been derived through various partnerships providing needed capital. Partnerships have also enabled the college to survive changing socio-political dynamics. Legitimacy of the college as a training institution for northerners is increasingly reliant upon relationships forged with aboriginal groups and their industry partners.

As Dickerson (1992) notes, tying education and training to a non-renewable resource-based economy is dubious considering the North's history:

> In the past, much of the economic development theory was predicated on the assumption that the non-renewable sector would generate employment; that expanding this sector would have a spill-over effect, enabling Native people to become part of the wage economy...this has not happened in the past four decades.... (p. 148)

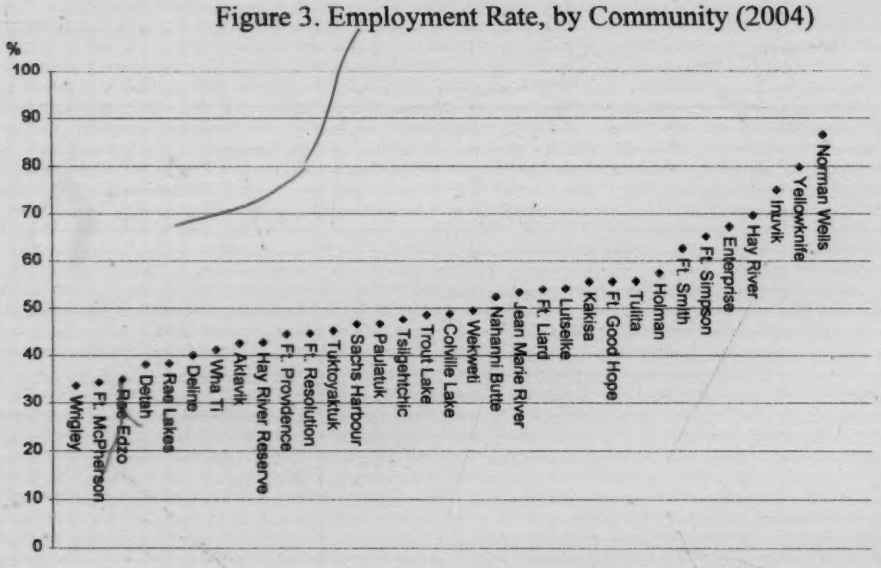
Dickerson's caveat is reflected in controversy over linkages between non-renewable resource development and education. While some respondents suggested a strong economy provides an incentive for northerners to return to school, others stated the opposite, indicating that the allure of lucrative wages preempts a return to education for adults. An examination of statistics related to labour force participation and school enrolment seems to indicate the latter assessment.

According to the Department of Education, Culture and Employment (Government of the Northwest Territories, n.d. a, p. 131), there were 769 full time equivalent students attending the College in 1999 – a number that has dropped to 610 in 2006 (Dent, 2006). This drop has occurred despite an increase in population to the territory (approximately 2,000 people) and an increase in high school completion rates which have doubled for aboriginal northerners within this time frame (Northwest Territories Bureau of Statistics, 2006).

While college enrolment has decreased, employment has increased. According to the *Annual Labour Force Report* (Northwest Territories Bureau of Statistics, 2005a) on average 23,900 persons were in the labour force, representing an overall participation rate of 76.1%. The participation rate has remained relatively steady since 2001. In 2005, there were some 1,300 persons unemployed in the NWT, a decrease of 600 persons from 2001. The overall NWT unemployment rate stood at 5.4% for 2005, a decrease from the 8.6% unemployment rate in 2001.

In 2005, the employment rate for aboriginal and non-aboriginal persons stood at 55.1% and 83.4%, respectively. Significant differences in unemployment rates also exist. Aboriginal unemployment stood at 11.3%, while the non-aboriginal rate was only 1.9%. The highest levels of unemployment are found in smaller communities, which range considerably (figure 3).

Figure 3. Employment Rate, by Community (2004)



Northwest Territories Bureau of Statistics, 2005c

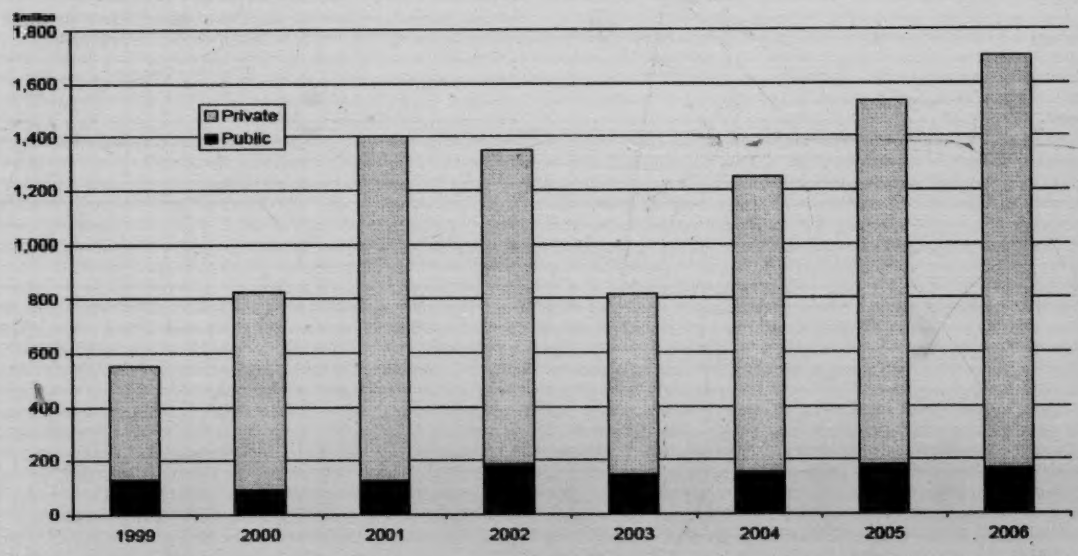
A positive trend in aboriginal labour force participation can also be attributed to increased control of education, training and employment by aboriginal groups. Despite being still underrepresented and occupying low entry level jobs, significant increases have been made in the mining sector for aboriginals who now comprise 39% of all NWT employees in the diamond industry; of these, 70% are in low-skilled professions (Northwest Territories Bureau of Statistics, 2005c). These figures stand in stark contrast to aboriginal labour force participation a decade earlier which accounted for just 10% of all full time positions in the mining industry (NWT & Nunavut Chamber of Mines, p. 14).

These figures support the notion that a strong economy and mechanisms in place to hire aboriginal people has made it difficult for the college to procure suitable candidates, despite funding in place and political pressure to do so. At the same time, a direct correlation exists between increased non-renewable resource development and

expansion of trades-related programming at the college. For example, 1995-96, approximately 10% of skills-based courses offered related directly to mining, oil and gas. In contrast, approximately 40% of programs offered in 2004-05, related directly to this sector (Appendix D). This last estimation is much higher if funding sources is considered.

Of the 43.1 million dollars allocated to fund vocational training in 2005, 85% (or $36.7 million) came from government sources (Neary, 2006a). While public sector investment has remained virtually the same (approximately $100 million dollars) since 1999, private sector investment has almost tripled, from approximately $550 to $1600 million dollars (figure 4).

Figure 4: Public & Private Capital Investment Northwest Territories, 1999-2006



Northwest Territories Bureau of Statistics, 2006

Given the exponential increase in investment and income generated by industry, it is surprising more third-party funding outside of government coffers is not forthcoming. This discrepancy suggests resource development remains a state sponsored enterprise, as the majority of "third-party" funding is government-derived. The discrepancy between

public and private investment also raises questions about the degree to which governments compensate industry at the expense of its own citizenry – a situation that has created considerable consternation over Premier Joe Handley's "letter of comfort" which was sent to producers of the Mackenzie Gas Project to promise a "stable and predictable royalty regime" (Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly, 2006, p. 658), sparking fears that acquiescence to industry demands will result in northerners being short-changed yet again.

What is also significant about these changing socio-political dynamics is industry not only acts through government to exert its interests, but also through aboriginal elites. As we have already seen, hegemony requires "granting of concessions" to coercively infuse interests of the market through civil society. These concessions include royalties, rents and preferential hiring policies, some of which are contained in impact benefit agreements (IBAs) which are signed separately with individual aboriginal groups and industry.

IBAs are undisclosed and brokered independently with each aboriginal group - a situation that has contributed towards the balkanization of the Dene Nation and other aboriginal groups who are now beholden to industry. This can be seen in discord between the Dene First Nations over the proposed Mackenzie Gas Project. Groups who have signed deals with industry (Inuvialuit, Gwich'n and Sahtu and the Inuvialuit) are now pressuring the Deh Cho to comply by becoming a signatory, as failure to do so could potentially forestall the project (Jaremko, January 27, 2006).

Within this context, the college must now negotiate with aboriginal groups whose position is politically bolstered by industrial third party funding. Being *responsive* to

community needs therefore implies facilitating training and employment programs envisioned by aboriginal leaders, which are then coordinated through various partnerships and committees involving industry. This has created a sense of immediacy in providing quick-fix solutions to fulfill hiring quotas through training programs that did not exist prior to the economic boom.

Noticeably absent from the decision-making process are dissenting voices who question *progress* brought about by mega-project developments. As one respondent explained, provision must be made towards creating alternative means of economic development to encourage self-sufficiency and community sustainability. Presently, these efforts are precluded by a preoccupation with immediate gains of resource royalties and rents. Taken from this perspective, official discourse pertaining to learner needs is legitimized through appropriation of an indigenous voice tied to industry, resulting in training for short-term employment. In turn, options encouraging locally developed sustainable alternatives are limited.

According to the territorial education report, *People: Our Focus for the Future* (Government of the Northwest Territories, 1994), "A northern college system provides many benefits…it lets us provide programs that are culturally appropriate…." The report recognizes there is a continued demand for community based training. This demand will continue and perhaps even increase as a result of land claims and community initiatives (p. 70). However, if we consider the current course offerings in communities, little has been done to broaden horizons for people about to take ownership of government - a concern raised by both a respondent and a member of the legislative assembly (Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly, 2006, p. 452).

Relegating education to a technical training ground creates other problems for a society in transition. Reactive, quick-fix solutions to perceived labour shortages disguise low formal education levels, as signing groups become sinecures of mega projects through preferential hiring practices. While the optics may appear impressive as seen in increased hiring of northern aboriginals at mine sites, most employees are young men who occupy low-level positions and must leave their community for extended periods of time to fulfill shift work. Meanwhile, the incentive to increase *productivity* is trumped by a leadership financially compensated and motivated by the *passive* collection of rent and resource royalties – a situation having implications for democratic governance if we consider the "rentier class" of "neotribal capitalism" and the pervasive "rentier mentality" ensuing amongst the general populace.

Finally, marketization of education has contributed towards regional globalization as people continue to vacate small communities in favor for larger centers. This shift is promoted by discrepancy in course offerings between regional campuses and communities. In stark contrast to regional campuses, smaller communities hosting a Community Learning Center, provide only adult basic education and skill based training. While understandable, given the level of demand and resources available (both human and financial), this discrepancy requires people in smaller communities to relocate in order to broaden their education possibilities.

By considering the implications these pressures have on small indigenous communities, their long-term viability comes into question as the only work available outside of government jobs is based on the short-term boom and bust cycle of non-renewable resource extraction industries. As the workforce becomes more educated,

more people will leave small communities, completing what arguably began in the 1950's when aboriginal people were coerced off the land through family allowance credits and government welfare – thus accomplishing the project of state formation.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

Purpose

This thesis seeks to understand the influence that the current economic climate, driven by the extraction of non-renewable resources currently underway in the NWT, is having on adult education policy and program development. Interviews were employed as a means to better understand realities of local labor market influenced educational policy and its implications on policy process and practice through the voices of those given authority and responsibility for developing policy on behalf of northerners, and also those affected by such policies.

Guiding the inquiry is a central research question exploring the degree to which educational policy process and practice reflect local aspirations, values and realities given the emphasis on vocational training geared towards an economy controlled and governed by the interests of large multinational corporations and an emerging class of aboriginal elite. Connected to this question is understanding the manner in which adult educators and policy planners at Aurora College respond to pressures of mega-project development.

These questions relate directly to the education section of the Arctic Human Development Report (2005), which endeavors to understand values and interests that drive policy formation. Particular examination of efforts to capture economic rents from mega-projects as "special features of life in the Arctic" (p. 17) is examined in relation to implications for governance and adult education.

Research Contribution

A summary of the inquiry is an apt time to reflect upon Lather's dictum regarding the need to ensure that theory does not become the container in which data must be poured (1991). Contamination of data by researcher bias begs the question: How does this inquiry contribute towards educational research regarding the impact of mega-projects on adult education policy, that otherwise would not have been arrived at if data gathering had not taken place? In other words, how does this inquiry constitute "research," and what significant contributions does it make?

The most salient contribution this inquiry makes stems from novel insights shared by respondents. Far from being a uniform account of northern development, perceptions are fraught with tensions which occur on multiple and diffuse planes. As we have seen, tensions exist: 1. between various forms of government; 2. between governments and industry; and 3. within communities. This research inquiry has specifically examined the manner in which public policy both shapes and responds to these tensions.

Tensions interact synergistically to shape the present context instead of acting in isolation. For example, competition for resource royalties (tensions between governments) has lead to aboriginal groups signing separate agreements with industry (tension between governments and industry). In turn, balkanization of aboriginal groups leads to tensions at the local level as community members clash over notions of community sustainability. This can be seen in rifts caused by an emerging aboriginal elite comprador bourgeoisie - as necessitated by the architects of mega-projects - and tribal members.

Caught in the fray is adult education. As a traditional bureaucratic apparatus of the state, Aurora College must navigate through a shifting socio-political terrain whose landscape contains new policy actors and a re-alignment of power. In this setting, the college must adapt and respond to these changes in a manner that ensures its relevance and survival. This chain of events contributes towards marketization of adult education; in turn, new cycles of tensions are spawned.

While a thematic presentation of findings is interesting in-and-of-itself, they also help to form a contemporary northern *zeitgeist* which would not have occurred without perceptions shared by those immersed in the business of education, training and northern development. It is at this juncture that "theory" is developed through "theorizing." In other words, by providing a snap-shot of northern culture from policy actors interviewed, theory is engaged in dynamic fashion. With respect to the inquiry, Marxian notions of state formation and hegemony are challenged by data gathered, as thematically conceptualized in the form of tensions described.

Unlike the "modern state" from which Gramsci formulated his theories, *northern* state formation requires an analysis adjusted for cultural exigencies associated with aboriginal political economy – namely a postcolonial transition from tribalism to neotribalism vis a vis capital accumulation and mega-project development on contested lands. Theorizing northern adult education from this vantage point has enabled a new understanding of northern society and the spheres which encompass it.

Key Findings

Over the past 60 years, adult education in the NWT has shifted from informal evening classes (1950's and 1960's) to institutionalized and individualized forms of learning,

whose outcomes and success are directly linked to labour market needs. As numerous government documents and interview findings indicate, attitudes toward the new economic boom by policy planners and many northerners is clear: Seize opportunities to develop skills otherwise much of the wealth will leave the region. As in the past, a transient workforce will readily fill new northern niches if local skilled labour is not readily available.

While the goals and outcomes of education have remained the same - to transition aboriginal northerners into the wage economy - the emergence of aboriginal policy actors has changed the manner in which the transition has occurred. Paradoxically, education has become more structured through increased accreditation and bureaucratization, and concomitantly more diffuse through multiple service providers competing for a limited, politicized clientele required to fulfill northern hiring quotas. While the former has produced normalizing effects owing to the colonial context in which formal education has traditionally operated in, the latter has empowered aboriginal leaders to act with greater capacity to ensure that a concerted effort is made on the part of government and industry in training and employment of tribal members.

These changes to adult education have been accompanied by an emphasis on privatization, as seen in new partnerships which now involve a diverse array of stakeholders. Consequently, Aurora College - which traditionally only had to serve the agenda of the GNWT - must now also respond to the needs of an aboriginal elite and its industry partners if it is to remain to be seen as responsive, relevant and viable.

Despite rhetoric to the contrary, a change in policy actors has not translated into a change in adult education policy since the arrival of a colonial state apparatus to the

North in the post-World War II period. Instead, recent political developments have exacerbated a closer alliance between the interests of the state and market, resulting in the continued commodification of adult education.

Taken from a Gramscian view, discourses pertaining to internal colony and natural resource curse fail to consider parallel forms of state formation and hegemony which are now being exercised on a populace divided along political and ethnic lines. Analysis must therefore include socio-political implications of policies that promote passive forms of capital accumulation. In doing so, a more nuanced understanding of adult education and the impacts caused by mega-projects can be arrived at.

Expansion of skill-based programs at Aurora College provides a tangible example of how market forces impact adult education. This expansion has not directly interfered with other programs offered, as third-party funding (mostly from government) has been made available for industrial training. However, program funding has changed the nature in which the college operates, as government sponsored training programs in non-renewable resource industries targets aboriginal students only. This policy clearly reflects increased politicization of education through self-governance agreements that are tied to industry.

Availability of funding determines to a large degree the kinds of programs and student participation taking place. At the same time, the current socio-political climate encourages prospective adult learners to participate in industrial training opportunities to take advantage of jobs generated by mega-project development – a situation having negative implications for newly emerging forms of governance, economic diversification and community sustainability.

Recommendations

As the findings suggest, providing both upgrading and post-secondary education has spread resources thinly and undermined efforts by adult educators. Efforts by the GNWT to further high school completion rates was endorsed as a move to increase the number of people capable of enrolling in postsecondary education and entering the workforce. Continued efforts to promote and encourage students to remain in the K-12 system are a proactive measure for new employment opportunities in the mining, oil and gas industries. It also provides opportunities for the college to re-direct funds to increase post-secondary education possibilities in other areas required to develop sustainable northern communities. Programs designed to promote alternative forms of development could therefore be developed and promoted.

Ironically, efforts to include trade centers in local high schools contribute towards increased opportunities for northerners to pursue careers outside vocational strands. This is because students who have participated in high school trades programs do not require access programs at the college level. By alleviating the burden to provide upgrading, the college can re-allocate funds towards other areas. This could include offering a greater diversity of programs in smaller centers. Increasing learning opportunities in small communities will help mitigate the current northern brain drain to urbanized areas.

With this in mind, stay-in-school initiatives must include support for trades-related programs, not because they are necessarily tied to the economy, but because they provide a niche that has been traditionally neglected at the secondary school level. To avoid any conflict of interest, funding for trades programming should come from government sources rather than those of industry.

At the same time, industry should not support trades-related programming per se, where an obvious quid pro quo exists. Rather, it must understand its responsibility to contribute towards the development of healthy northern communities by supporting a diversity of programs. In doing so, long-term benefits to communities will include a more stable, educated workforce, which will benefit *all* employers in the long-term.

Aboriginal leaders have a role to play in ensuring responsible investment of funds derived from agreements with industry and government are put toward long-term educational investment for their people. Such a move will help ensure a balance is struck between renewable resource development, and non-renewable resource development – a move that will promote the original goal of "mixed economy". In doing so, groups are less likely to be beholden or co-opted by industry as locally developed programs are developed. Greater self-sufficiency will ensure a smoother transition into self-governance as corrosive effects of rent are mitigated.

Finally, minerals should stay in the ground until northerners are best positioned to reap full benefits of development once land claims have been completely settled, northern post-secondary education has sufficiently diversified, and levels of formal education are sufficient to ensure full participation in the economy. These measures will ensure a balanced and holistic approach to development occurs. By taking a proactive approach to development – one that is allowed to evolve outside the realm of mega-projects - favorable outcomes that build community capacity may be achieved.

Before the above recommendations can be made, space must be provided to understand the full implications of development – some of which involve education policy as described in this thesis. Such deliberation requires a re-evaluation of

Enlightenment values of progress, modernity, and the concomitant standard of living and dependency this creates. Principles of Ghandian *Satyagraha*, or self-sufficiency, can be equally transferred to the North in its bid for devolution and increased autonomy. These kinds of philosophical discussions must accompany, albeit precede, the heady pace at which mega-project development is occurring– something which the present context of isolation, tribal self-governance and competing interests involving powerful transnational corporations silence in favor of the profit motive. Developing praxis by raising a collective critical consciousness, or *conscientization* (Freire, 1983), is therefore a necessary prerequisite to ensure effective participation in formalized hearings into megaprojects.

In considering my recommendations some concerns that should be addressed at the community level include:

1. Defining acceptable threshold levels for mega-project development to proceed. As a socially constructed indicator, factors such as education levels, existing mechanisms of governance and demographics must be factored into a general rubric from which to determine appropriate levels that are in keeping with community sustainability.
2. Exploring possibilities for generating greater self-sufficiency through the promotion of alternative forms of development and learning in order to gain skills required to supplement traditional practices while concomitantly participating in a wage economy.
3. Examining repercussions on local labour forces for small communities potentially impacted by mega-projects. Repercussions include: loss of community services

as local labour is lured by higher paying jobs in the mining, oil and gas industries; adaptation to shift work on families; increased income generated by a young, relatively unskilled and mostly male sector of the population; demographic shift away from smaller communities.

4. Examining political impacts caused by an economy centered on collection of resource royalty and rent.

Future Research

While the original intent of the inquiry was to interview only college policy planners, it became rapidly evident that a more nuanced analysis required understanding perceptions of those on the receiving end of such policy. Although one individual from a community directly impacted by mega-project development was able to provide valuable perspectives, further insights and analysis from members of aboriginal communities was needed. Hence, an emphasis on gaining perceptions from policy planners may have inadvertently contributed towards the status quo which the thesis set-out to critically appraise.

Considering limitations of the current study, further research endeavoring to understand implications of policy for those it is intended *for* is required. In particular, a focus on northern aboriginal communities in the NWT is needed – one examining the efficacy of policy formation in relation to the current impetus of non-renewable resource extraction industries to the region. Tied to this is the manner in which training and employment agreements reached by aboriginal governments and industry is affecting local aspirations and notions of community sustainability.

Engaging members of aboriginal communities in a bottom-up approach requires longitudinal community-based research. Such an approach recognizes the importance of local knowledge that has been traditionally under-valued and under-utilized. In doing so, policy reflective of community aspirations can be formed.

A cross-comparative analysis involving communities or regions in various stages of the mega-project cycle would be beneficial towards understanding the nature in which participation occurs at the local level with respect to policy formation. This work would involve gathering perceptions in communities that are: a) anticipating development; b) presently engaged with development; and c) in a post-development/reclamation phase.

A methodology that builds capacity at the local level must also be considered in future work. This would include training and recruitment of community-based indigenous researchers who would be involved in data gathering and dissemination of findings. Such an approach would help ensure meaningful community participation and collaboration, as findings generated from the research would be generated from the people themselves. Findings could be shared at the local, national and international levels in an effort to link the wider circumpolar community.

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APPENDIX A

Type	Research Period	Research methods
Review of Literature	March-June, 2005	Surveying broad range of literature on adult education and resource extraction industries in the Northwest Territories
Main Visit	July 5-12, 2005	Semi-structured personal interviews
Verification of Transcripts	September, 2005	Interview transcripts sent to each respondent
Review of Literature	September-December, 2005	literature on development; literature specific to adult education in the NWT (gov't documents, policy documents)
Informal Visits	March & July 2006	Conversations with College personnel and other stakeholders (Fort Smith)
Review of Literature	March -November 2006	Selective review literature and data for final writing of thesis
Credibility	March, 2007	Draft sent to respondents and supervisor
Thesis Defense	March, 2007	

APPENDIX B

April 25, 2005

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Andrew Hodgkins and I am a master's student in the Faculty of Education at the University of Alberta. Presently I am doing research on northern education. I am specifically looking at *Implications of Industrial Development on Course Offerings at Aurora College*, which is the title of my thesis.

I am writing to invite you to participate in the project by serving as an interview subject. As someone with valuable experience in policy and planning, your assistance will provide tremendous insights and support in shaping the outcome of the project. Given the changing economic and political climate of the Northwest Territories, the study is timely and has received much interest and attention at the university. Possible benefits for the college include using the research as a forum for discussion regarding future policy and planning.

I intend to interview two or three college personnel at each of the three campuses this summer during the period of July 7-15th. The interview will consist of open-ended questions designed to get maximum feedback, and should take no more that one hour to complete. All interviews will be recorded on audiotape to ensure accuracy of responses. A copy of the interview transcript and synopses will be returned to you as a means for verifying what had been said during the interview.

Any data gathered would be in compliance with the "Standards of Protection of Human Research Participants", which is a protocol of the University of Alberta designed to respect and protect the integrity of research participants. The data gathered would only be used for my thesis work and be kept confidential at all time.

Your participation in the project is strictly voluntary and you have the right to withdraw anytime during the process. If you do decide to withdraw from the interview, any data collected will be not included in the study. As a commitment to privacy, anonymity and confidentiality, all data will only be disclosed at your discretion. At no time will your name be connected to responses or discussions held. Once the thesis has been written, a copy of the report will be sent to you for final verification and approval.

The plan for this study has been reviewed for its adherence to ethical guidelines and approved by the Faculties of Education and Extension Research Ethics Board (EE REB) at the University of Alberta. For questions regarding participant rights and ethical conduct of research, contact the Chair of the EE REB at (780) 492-3751. The following people may also be contacted in the case of concerns, complaints or consequences: Thesis

Supervisor: Dr. Ali Abdi (ph. 780-492-6819); Graduate Coordinator: Dr. Frank Peters (ph. 780-492-7607).

Please complete the statement of consent and return it in the self-addressed envelope provided. A second copy of this letter has been included for you to keep as a reference.

Thank you for your assistance. I look forward to working with you!

Sincerely,

Andrew Hodgkins
Master's Student
Department of Educational Policy Studies,
Faculty of Education,
University of Alberta

.....

Statement of Consent:

I _____ have read the conditions for the research and give my consent to being interviewed for purposes of providing data for a Master's Degree in Education.

_____ _____

Signature Date

APPENDIX C

1. In your own opinion what is the college's mandate and how does thus relate to serving community needs?
2. How has the college changed in terms of enrolment, program development and philosophy since working here?
3. What set this campus apart from the others? What is it's relationship with the other campuses?
4. Has program development grown in certain areas more than others? How is programming prioritised? Have some programs been eliminated? Languages? Opportunities for women?
5. Is program development done proactively or retroactively?
6. Have recent industrial developments to the region impacted the college? If so, then how?
7. Who are the stakeholders involved in program development? What role and say do they have? What is the process in which communication to the college is made in regards to community needs?
8. Do you think these programs work for community empowerment? What differences have you seen? How are programs gauged in terms of their success? Are there things you would like to see improved?
9. Is there anything you would like to add to this interview that you feel we have not covered?

APPENDIX D

1995-96	2004-05
Cooking - Aklavik	CPR Arctic Oil
HE Operator Deline	Safety Training ILA
HE Operator, Ft. Norman	Safety Training IRC
HEO Training	Safety Training GTC
Northern Skills Development Program Aurora	Safety Training AKITA
Mine Training	Safety Training AHRDA
HEO Training	Safety Training ECE
HEO TRNG Saniqiluaq	Class 1 Driver ASEP
HEO NUNAVUT	Industrial Oil & Gas
HEO Training	Mining Initiative
HEO Coppermine	Oil & Gas Parntership
HEO Repulse Bay	DIAVIK Tool Training
Heavy Equip AIR	Mineral Processing
Northern Skills Development Program Thebacha	Oil Gas Training ECE
Mining Training	HEO Class 1 Ft Prov.
Heavy Equip- Rae	Camp Cooking/Catering
CO-OP Cooking	Class 1 Driver Training
Introduction to Cooking	Kitchen Helper
Northern Skills Development Program Yellowknife	HEO Providence
Northern Skills Development Program HQ	Pre-Employment Cooking
	Diamond Training
	Office Admin Mining COOP
	Pipeline Operations Training
	Mill Curriculum Dev

Personal Communication, Aurora College, May 2006

Highlighted sections indicate programs specifically targeted towards mega-projects. The College was able to provide funding sources for 2004 programs only.
Note: Many programs receive funding to support mega-project development. These include industry (Arctic Oil, AKITA, DIAVIK) and government (ASEP, AHRDA) sources, and therefore also include "Safety Training" and driver education.